ブックデザイン＊木谷正和［エクスプリム］

宗像教授異考録

Munakata Kyoujuikouroku

BIG COMICS SPECIAL

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宗像教授異考録

第四集

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星野之宣

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Yukinobu Hoshino Presents

小学館
BCS1019

BIG COMICS SPECIAL

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謎多き神・サルタヒコとイースター島のモアイに関連が!?
八幡神と鉄との関連から見えてくる近代日本の呪術!?
恐怖の対象・鬼婆伝説に隠された悲しき秘密!?
世界各地で語り継がれてきた伝説や神話、
古来から受け継がれてきた風習等には、何らかの
歴史的事実が秘められている。東亜文化大学教授・
宗像伝奇が閉ざされし歴史の真実の扉を開く。

小学館
BCS1019

Munakata Kyojiyu Ikouroku

胸形教授遺稿録

BIG COMICS SPECIAL

THE CASE RECORDS OF PROFESSOR MUNAKATA

宗像教授異考録

Collection 4

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CHAPTER 11: THE SARUTAHIKO PROJECT

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Okinawa Prefecture

Yes. In ancient times, the Okinawans wouldn't call them "Takakuras", but instead named them by the number of pillars.

It looks quite similar to the ancient style of construction...

A "Takakura" ...

A granary built high off the ground to protect its stores against rats.

A six-pillared one would be called a "Mutsumata", and an eight-pillared one a "Yatsumata".

An eight-pillared one a "Yatsumata"...

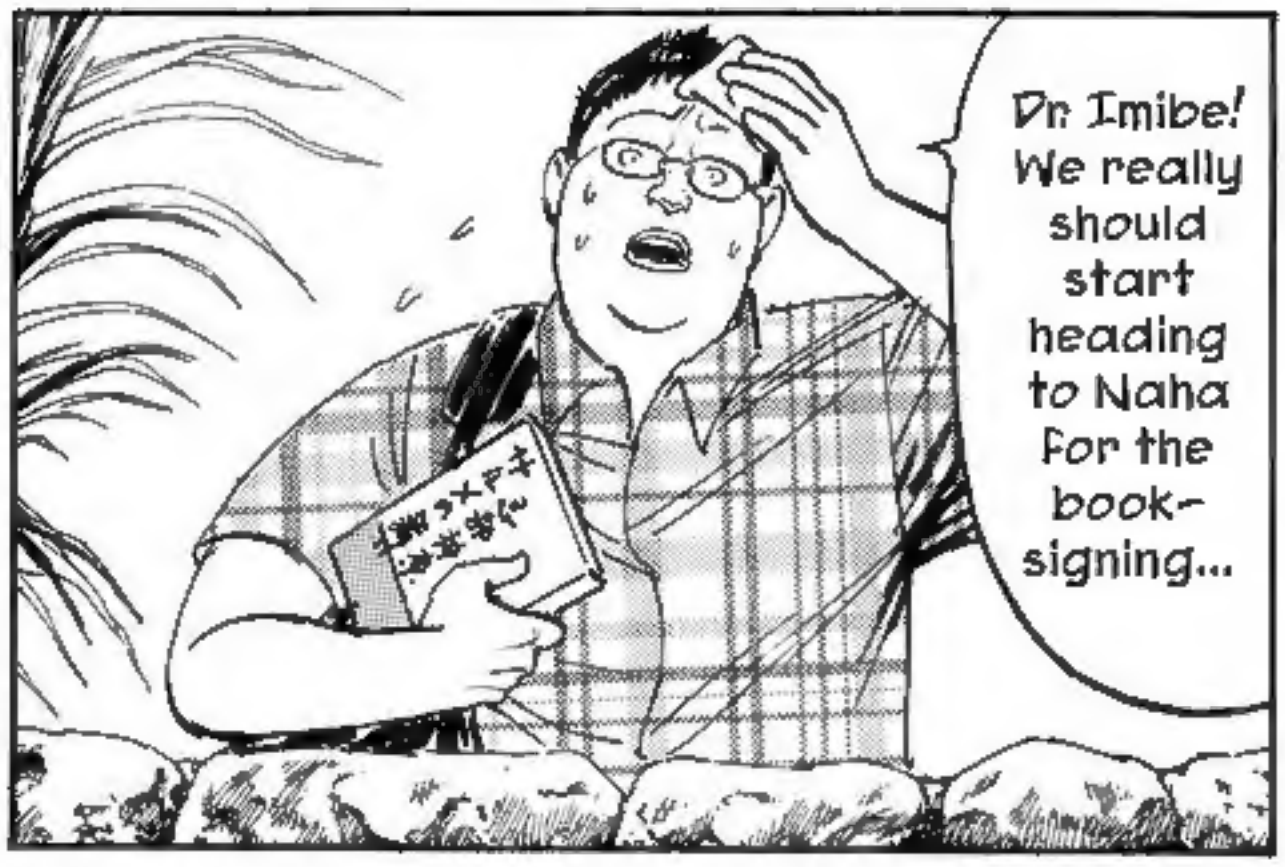
Huh?

Yamata... Yatsumata ...

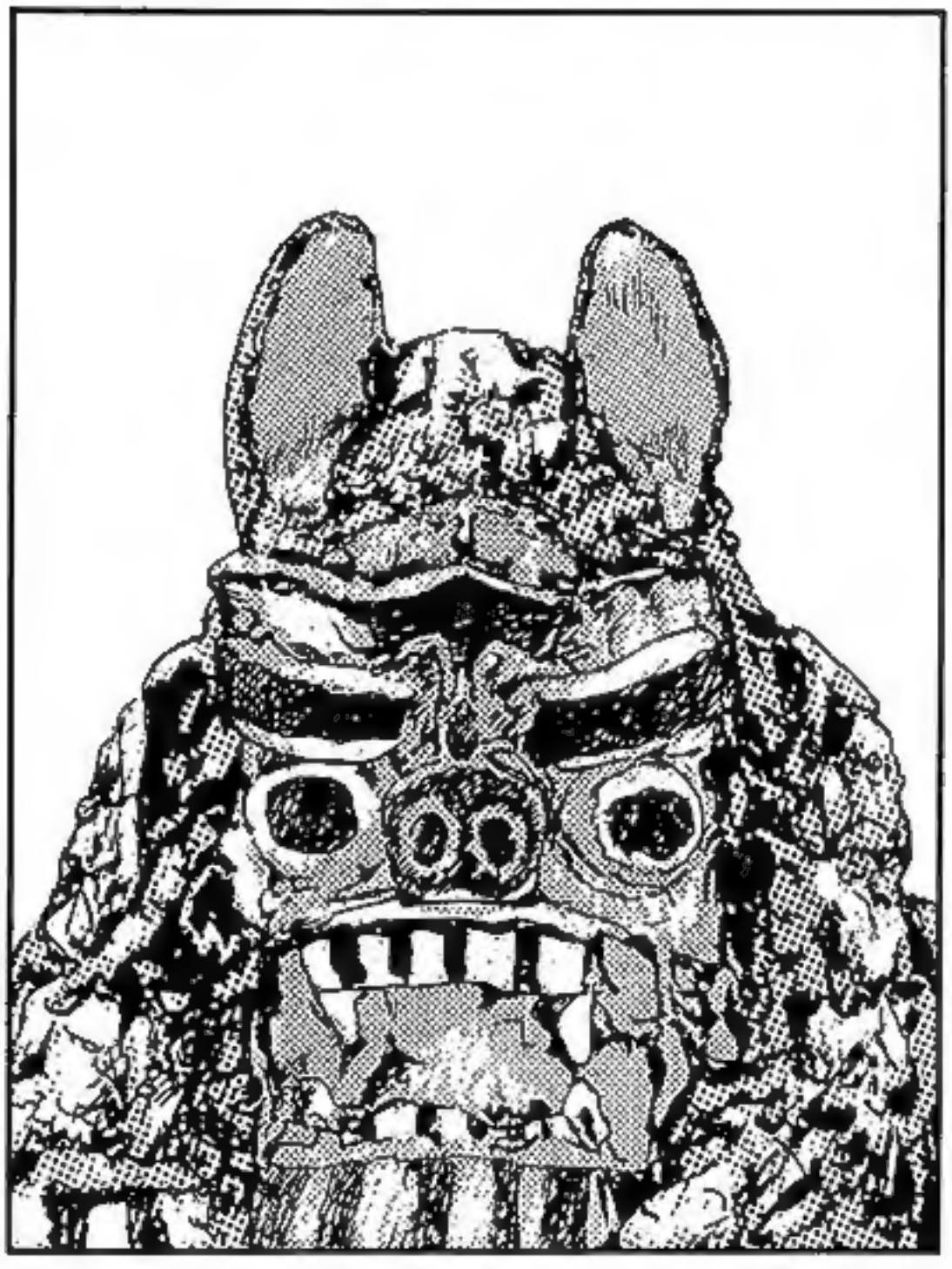
Yatsu-mata...

Yama-ta-no-Orochi ...

The original Izumo Grand Shrine...


Dr Imibe! We really should start heading to Naha for the book-signing...

Coming!
Thank you very much. This was highly informa-tive.



Outskirts of Yuzawa City
Akita Prefecture

The origin of these dolls, called the "Doll Dosojin", is unclear, but the Dosojin themselves were common throughout Japan since ancient times

These dolls standing over 3m tall, known as "Lord Shoki" or "Lord Kashima", can be found everywhere from Aomori and Akita to Niigata.

Since they stand at crossroads, it is thought that they protected travellers and prevented evil spirits and plagues from entering the village

You wouldn't happen to be Professor Munakata, would you?

Sanbh Tourism, Ltd.
Managing Director
Hashiba Hideyoshiro

Mr. Hashiba from Sanbh Tourism...

on the mythological god Sarutahiko.

I can understand that you would be suspicious of me. I've actually come here to ask you for your opinion...

Sarutahiko ...!?

I called your university in Tokyo, and they said that you'd be in this area after your extension lectures in Akita City...

I'm impressed you found me considering I don't carry a cell phone, which is hardly any different from being collared.

Following the "Nation Yielding" pledged by the Provincial Gods at Izumo, the Heavenly Grandson Ninigi and his company descended from Takamagahara..

I was told that you had a rather distinctive appearance, so I asked around, and... Oh, my apologies.

Hmpf...

At a place called "Ame no Yachimata", the crossroads leading to Earth, Sarutahiko appeared before this company...

Amidst the overwhelmed company, the goddess Ame no Uzume, with her superior vision, confronted Sarutahiko

His abnormally long nose was one meter long, and he stood anywhere from two to ten meters tall. His eyes shone like a red lantern plant, and he stood there completely mute.

She learned that Sarutahiko was a Provincial God that had come to welcome the Heavenly Grand son's company, and guide them to the Earth as their "herald"

But in this ocean, Sarutahiko [illegible] by a shell and drowned

They say that the "Okitama Stone" submerged in the waters of Futamigaura in Ise, is his spirit

After guiding them to Takachiho in Kyushu, Sarutahiko set off for Ise with Uzume

This is as far as the myth goes, but Sarutahiko was also called Sadahiko and Satahiko, and has so many names and faces that his true form is unknown

His long nose is considered the prototype of the Tengu's, and as he was believed to be an old man with white whiskers he is enshrined in Shirahige Shrine

Some say that Ise has an ancient local sun god that preceded worship of Amaterasu.

In Sanno Shrine on Mt. Hiei, he is known as the god Hayao, in Atsuta Shrine he is called Gendayu, and in Inari Grand Shrine in Fushimi, he is worshipped as Satahiko.

Hmm, I see...

It's enough to make you think that Sarutahiko was the general term for all the ancient Provincial Gods.

He's a truly elusive god...

I told you, I have something I want to show you! Just get in the boat. I'll explain on the way.

Now just one second. Where do you think you're taking me?

You still haven't told me the reason you're hung up on Sarutahiko.

.....

No, you give me an explanation first! I'm not going to let myself be used for some shady business!

Then if you'll excuse me...

but it looks like it's not all over yet, Professor Munakata.

The incident in Izumo may be behind us now...

Imibe... You again!

What...?

LET'S TALK IN THE SHIP... GO ON!

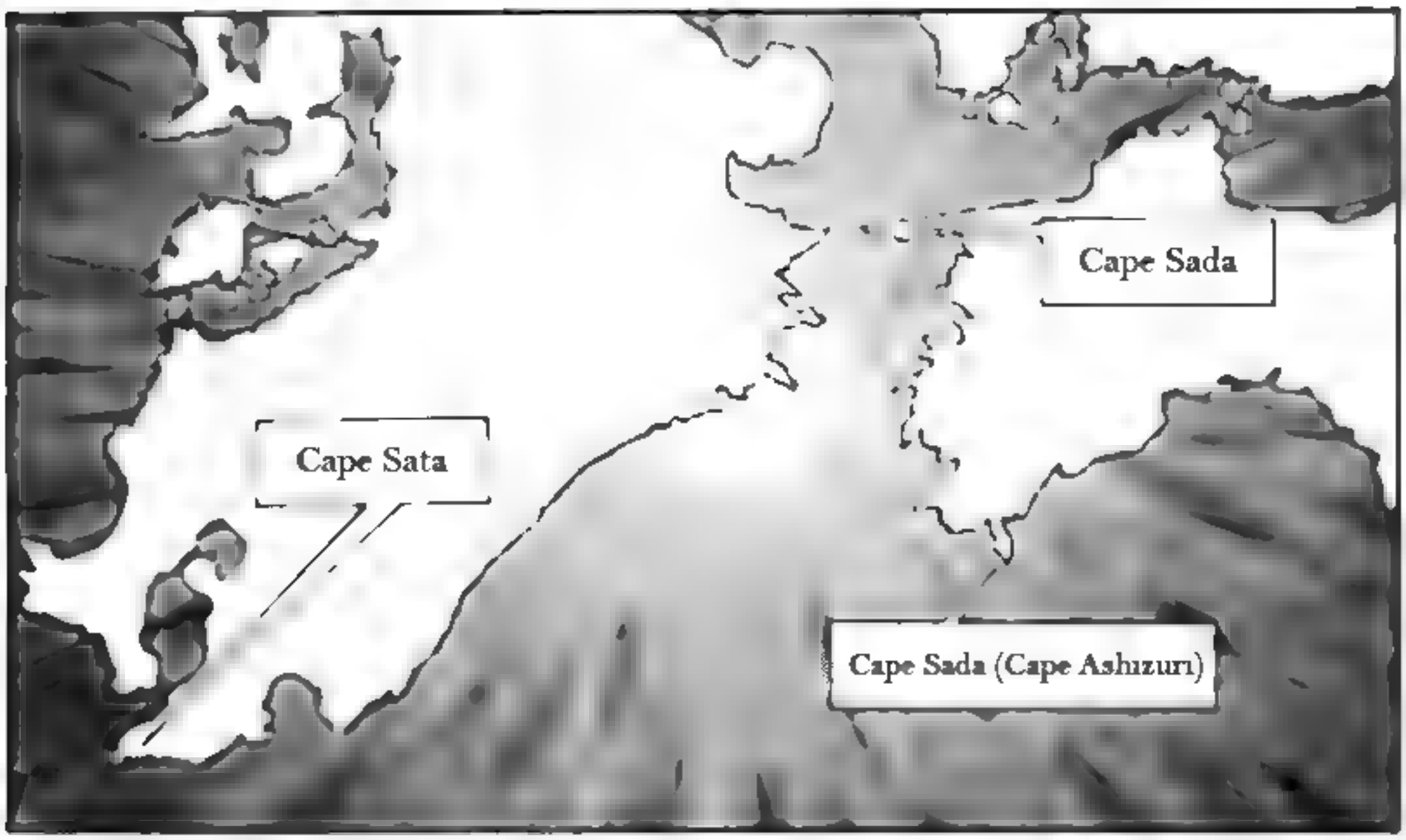
GET ON!

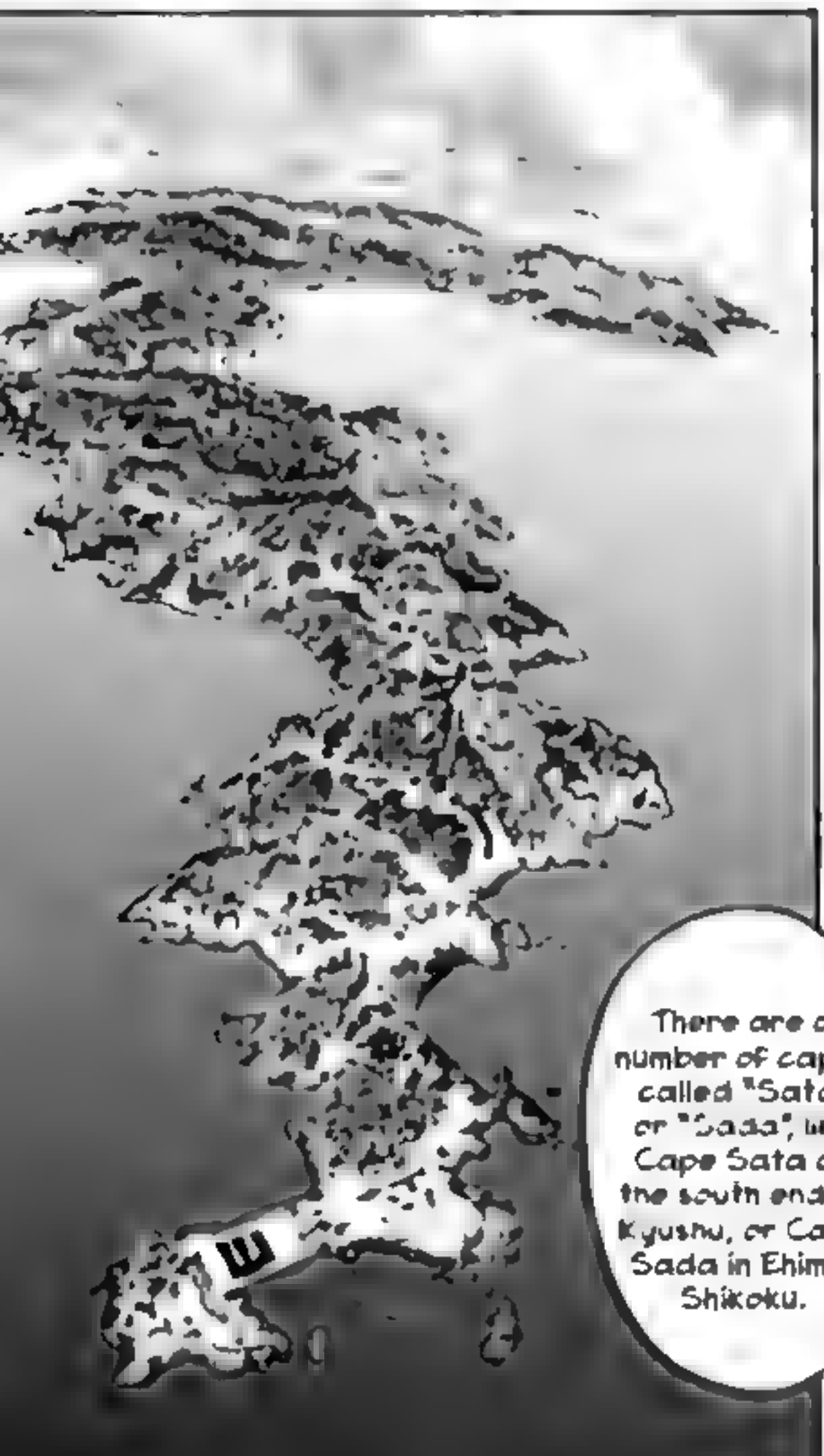
16

I was writing a discussion on Sarutahiko for a magazine about that time...

Mr. Hashiba here reached success from operating pleasure boats and luxury liners.

I've taken part in one of his hot spring tours a number of years ago.


Cape Sada
Cape Sata
Cape Sada (Cape Ashizuri)


III

Sarutahiko, who became the "herald" of the Heavenly Grandson, and guided them to Kyushu.
Sarutahiko may have also been called Satahiko or Sadahiko...

There are a number of capes called "Sata" or "Sada", like Cape Sata on the south end of Kyushu, or Cape Sada in Ehime, Shikoku.
But what if this "herald" meant a "cape"...?

And Cape Ashizuri in Kochi also goes by the name of Cape Sada...

Headlands are also occasionally called "noses". That makes Cape Sada, the longest cape in Japan, the longest "nose" in Japan.

If the group that migrated from Kyushu to Yamato in Kinai were the ones that founded the Yamato Court, then these capes would have been the landmarks that guided their fleet...

Hmm...

So I thought that might be the origin of the myth of Sarutahiko...

I Figured it was meant to be, so I started my own research!

Besides, I felt a little bit of a personal connection to the name Sarutahiko. Hahaha...

I was incredibly impressed when I read Dr. Imibe's theory in her magazine!

Look, Professor Munakata! We're approaching the shore of Niigata!

We're reconstructing the giant pillars, which they found in the Jomon-era Teraji Ruins in Niigata, on the shoreline!

Giant pillars ...!?

Isn't that the conclusion we reached in Izumo? That this cedar civilization existed along the coast of the Sea of Japan beginning at Sannai-Maruyama...

I figured that these giant landmarks, erected on not only capes but the coast as well, were Sarutahiko!

This is an amateur theory, but Sarutahiko's ten-meter height could have been possible if it were a giant pillar!

Chikamori Ruins

Mawaki Ruins

Toraji Ruins

SO THE CEDAR CIVILIZATION IS RELATED TO SARUTA-HIKO...!?

Sannai-Maruyama Ruins

Th...

AND WHY WOULD YOU DO THIS!? WHAT'S YOUR ANGLE!? EXPANDING YOUR TOUR-ISM BUSI-NESS!?

That's not all of it! It's Sarutahiko I'm...

We're also restoring the wood circles in Mawaki and Chikamori Ruins, on the coast of Ishikawa Prefecture!

There's another mythological monster with a similar description to Saruta-hiko.

A giant body, with eyes like a red lantern plant...

Its eyes were as red lantern plants, and it had one body, yet eight heads and eight tails... Its length extended over eight valleys and eight hills...
"Kojiki"

You're saying that Yamata-no-Orochi was the true form of Saruta-hiko...!?

Yama-ta-no-Orochi

If the Yamata-no-Orochi was the eight-pillared original Izumo Grand Shrine...

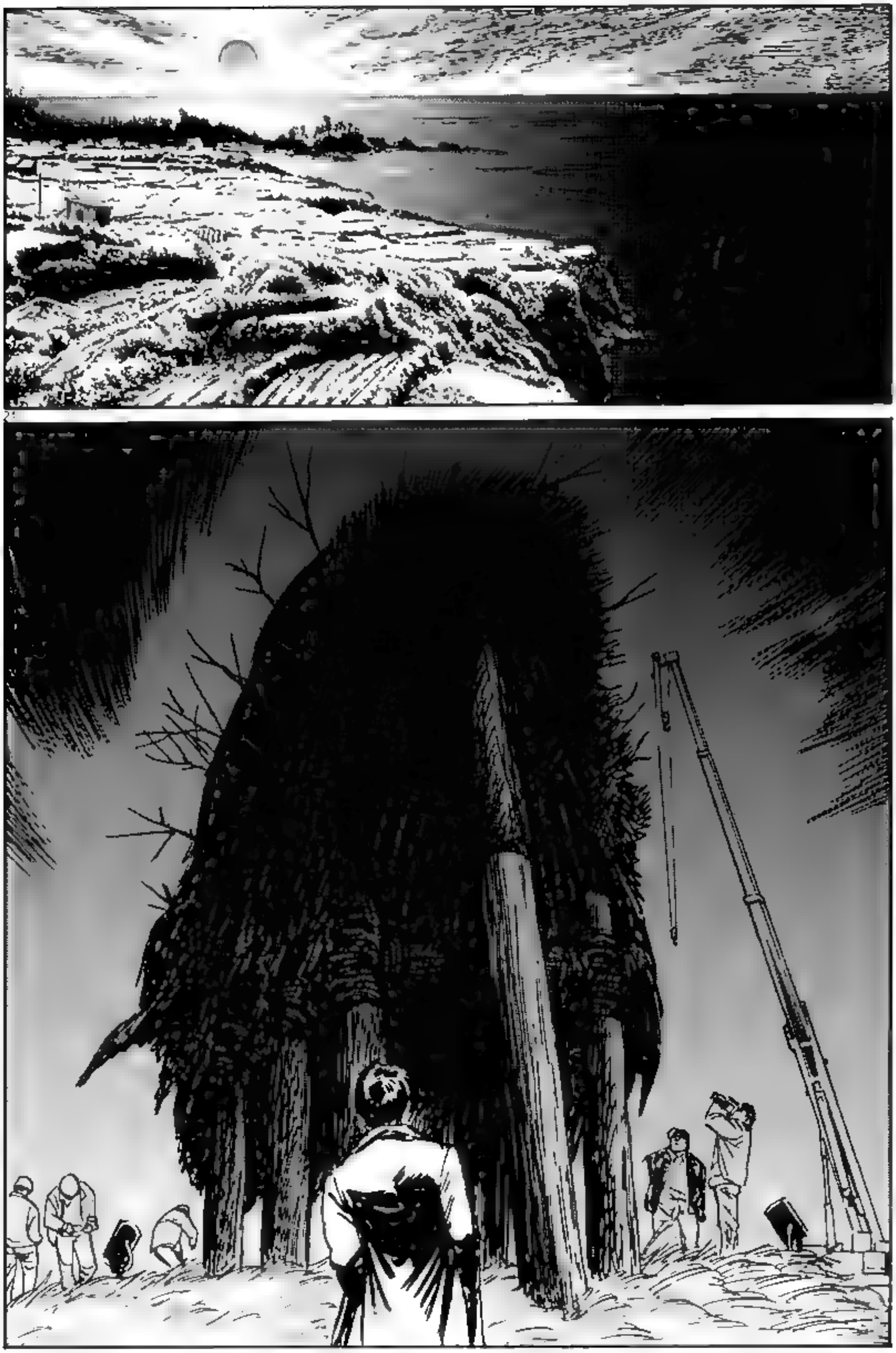
"Yamata" means divided into a number of branches. The same could be said for "Ame-no-Yachimata", where Sarutahiko stood.

It could be.

And "Yamata" and "Yachimata" could be connected to the eight-pillared buildings, known as "Yatsumata"!

Hmm !?

Then Sarutahiko could have been another eight-pillared structure... That's what I thought...!



Mnngh
...

Near Kukedo no-Hana,
Yatsuka District
Shimane Prefecture

"Kukedo of Kaga"... This is the birthplace of Sarutahiko.

Are we awake?

Looks like we're back in Izumo.

That means Sarutahiko was born and died at sea...

The Great God Sada, said to be an alias of Sarutahiko, was said to be born in that sea cave.

Good morning, Director!!

Mmm, good morn-ing!

I'm glad to see all you employees From the head office come all the way here to greet me!

Please watch your step. We're planning to excavate this cave and build a better stairway.

That's the reconstructed Sarutahiko, Funded by San'oh Tourism!

Imibe Shoichiro... So you're involved in this, too!

M... Muna-kata ...!?

OH! NO! PROFES-SOR MU-NAKATA! W-W-W-...

I should be asking you that! Are you going to make another rubbish TV program!?

W-W-W-WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING HERE!?

Y...Yeah. I consulted with a designer, and we decided to model it after the "Naumann Elephant".

Naumann Elephant!?

Shoichiro, this certainly is an eight-pillared structure, but doesn't it look like an elephant from this angle?

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That is a long nose, not a high-bridged nose!

Don't you think that the "elephant" is closest to that image!?

Sarutahiko is characterized by his massive body and long nose...

And the image was passed on,

of "the giant and long-nosed god"...

Are you suggesting that the Jomon people knew about the Naumann Elephants that went extinct 15,000 years ago?

The Jomon period began 13,000 years ago! They could have seen some of the surviving Naumann Elephants!

I think that Sarutahiko was a god that stood on capes and shores, to announce the borders of the province to the people coming by sea!

The god of borders...

Some say that Sarutahiko is the prototype of the "Dosojin", which stand at crossroads or roadsides, guiding travellers and guarding against evil spirits and plague...

Kana may have thought that Cape Sata and Cape Sada are Sarutahiko, but that doesn't explain all the Sarutahiko-connected shrines across the nation.

I think that there were a number of Dosojin of the sea along the coast of the Sea of Japan in Jomon times...!

...By the way, this is still incomplete, but don't you think that this Sarutahiko's face is familiar?

.....

The "Moai" of Easter Island~ Hmm-hmm!

Laugh if you want, but aren't the Moai like border gods that stand on the shore?

Hawaii

Hiva Oa

There are other Polynesian islands with idols that appear to be border gods...

Some say that some of them came to the ancient Japanese archipelago, and became the Jomon...

The Polynesians are the descendants of the voyaging people that came from East Asia...

If that's true, then it would hardly be strange that this common custom of border gods would spread throughout the Pacific. Am I wrong?

So first we'll reconstruct a massive Sarutahiko in Japan...

This is it!

Sarutahiko could open up a path from the Japanese roots to the South Pacific!

...When I heard this theory from Mr. Imibe, I slapped my knees in delight!

THEN START UP A CRUISING TOUR FROM THE JAPANESE ARCHIPELAGO TO THE POLYNESIAN ISLANDS!

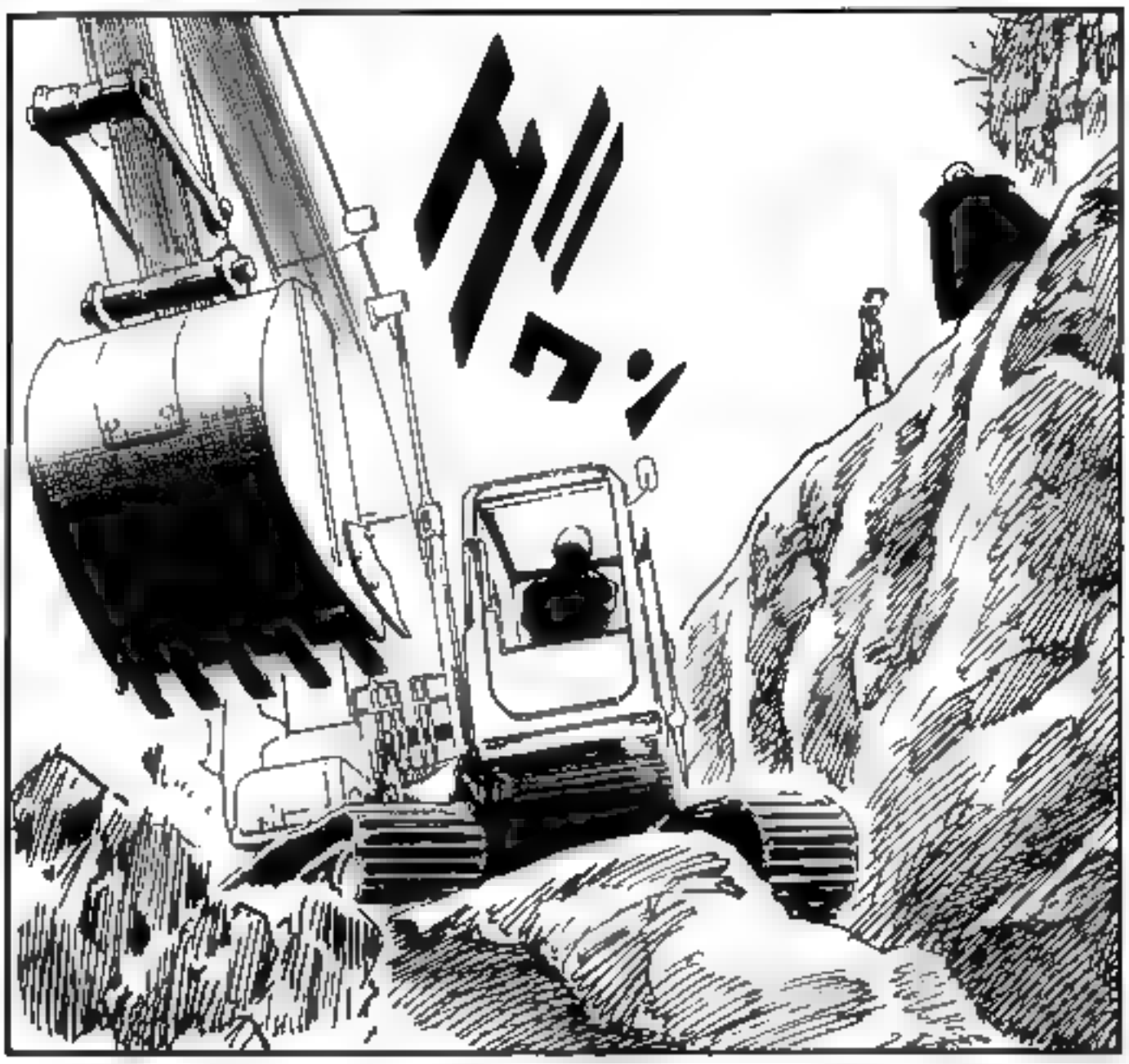
I CALL THIS THE "SARUTAHIKO PROJECT"!!

IT'S A GRAND TOUR EXPERIENCING THE TRAVELS OF THE VOYAGING PEOPLE, GUIDED BY THE BORDER GODS FROM SARUTAHIKO TO THE MOAI!!

So Mr. Hashiba funded my idea, and we're restoring cedar Sarutahikos in Niigata and Ishikawa as well!

Our TV station will be supporting this plan, by reporting on the reconstruction project and creating a documentary program!

I'VE BET SAN'OH TOURISM'S COMPANY FORTUNES ON THIS PROJECT, A FUSION OF CULTURAL PROGRAMS AND TOURISM!!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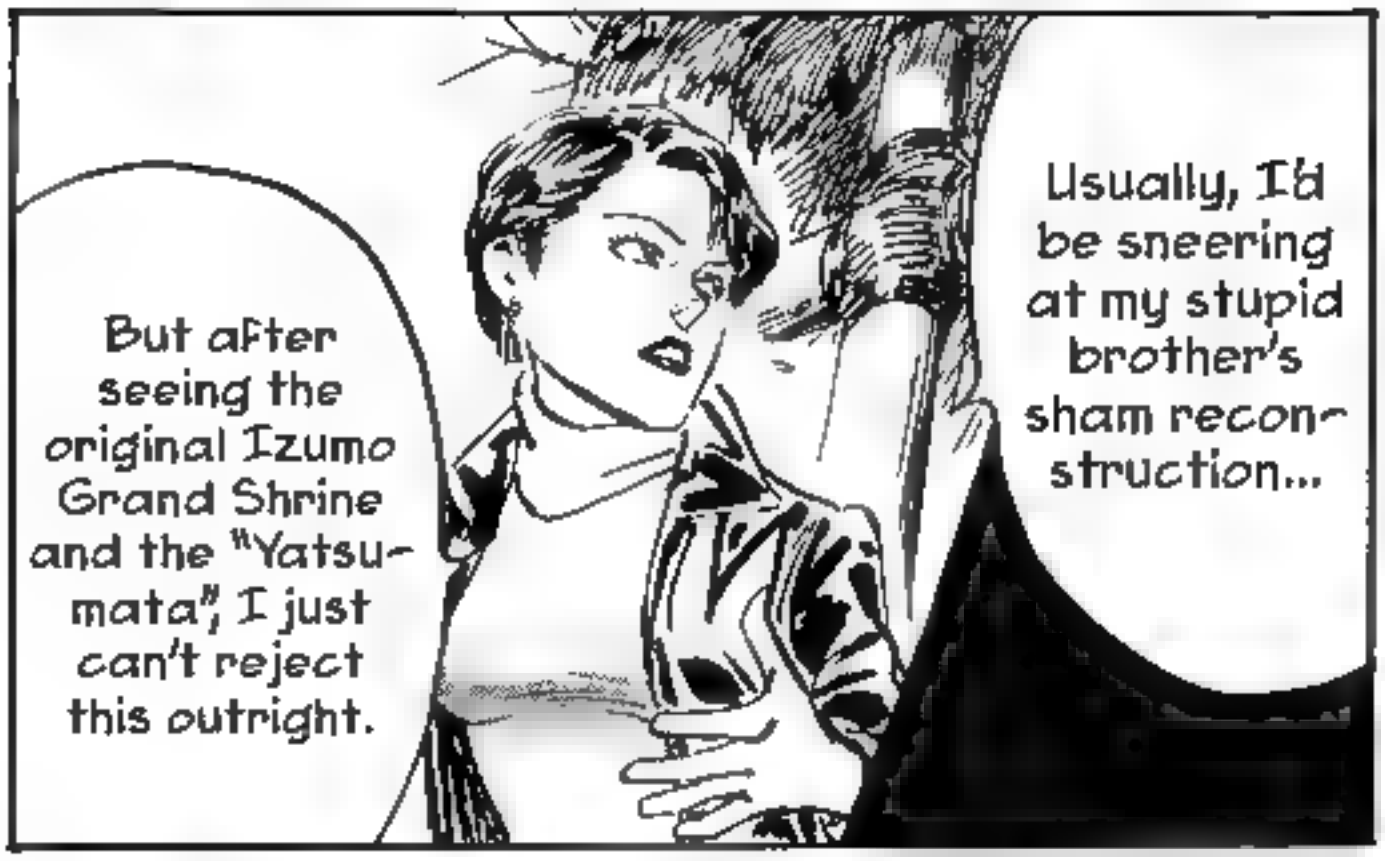
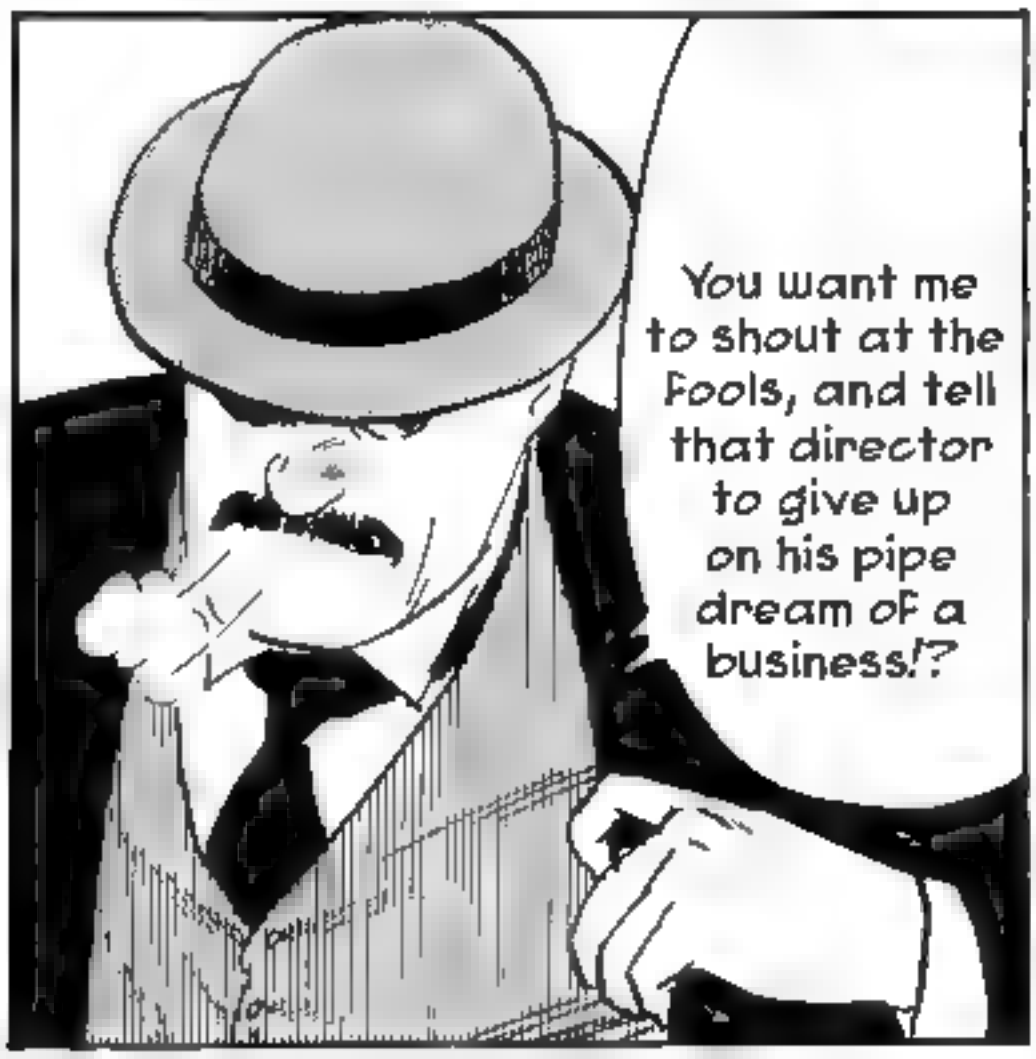

But after seeing the original Izumo Grand Shrine and the "Yatsumata", I just can't reject this outright.
Usually, I'd be sneering at my stupid brother's sham reconstruction...


You want me to shout at the fools, and tell that director to give up on his pipe dream of a business!?

Plus, I have my acquaintanceship with Mr Hashiba to consider...
So you pulled me into this!?

I thought that you might have a little interest in this...

I didn't think that far ahead.

Given the [illegible] and serpents engraved on the pillars and walls... The Jomon and [illegible] era, have had some kind of cultural relationship.

When I saw the original Izumo Grand Shrine, the first thing that came to mind was the [illegible] of the Maori.

I said "may have"! There's just one thing that concerns me...

You mean... that my brother's theory equating Sarutahiko with the Moai is logical?

WHAT'S THE MATTER !?

D...PART OF THE CLIFF JUST GAVE OUT...

Is this the remains of a sea cave like Kukedo...?

H... HUMAN BONES !!

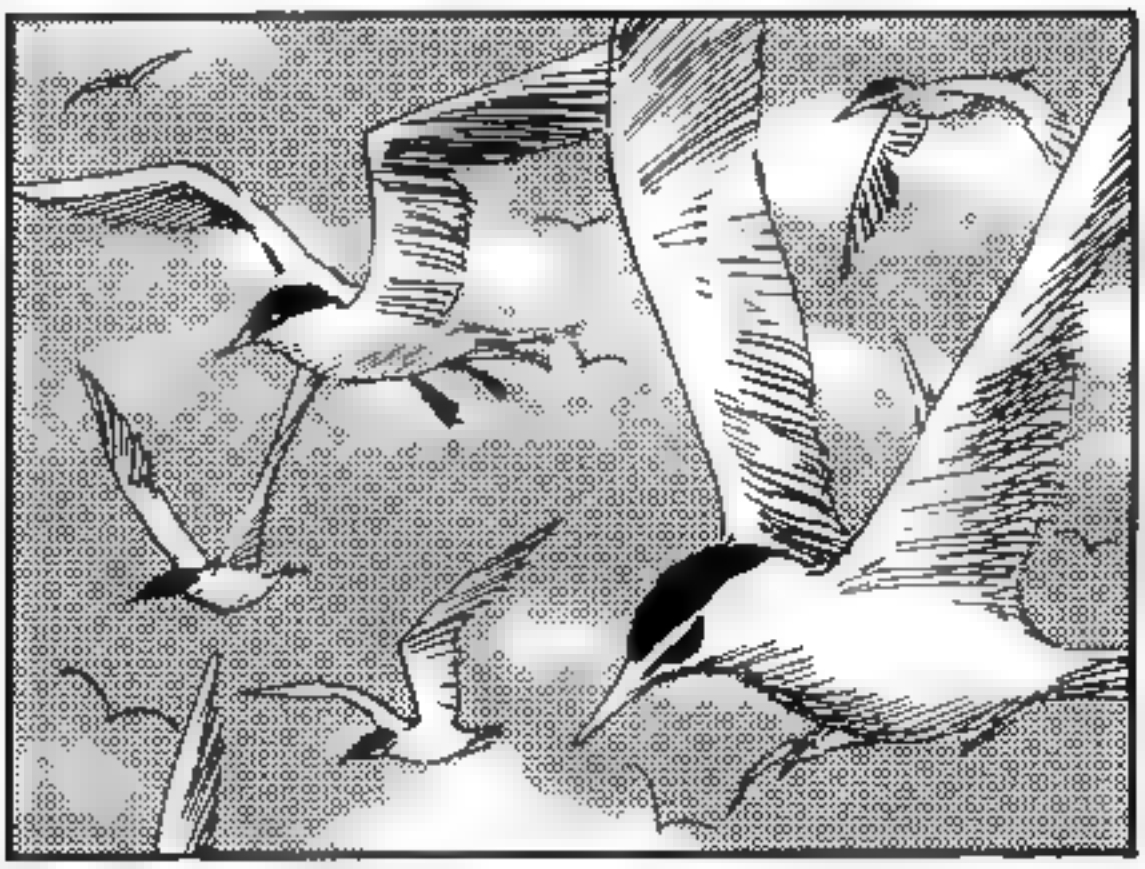
THERE'S SO MANY OF THEM !!

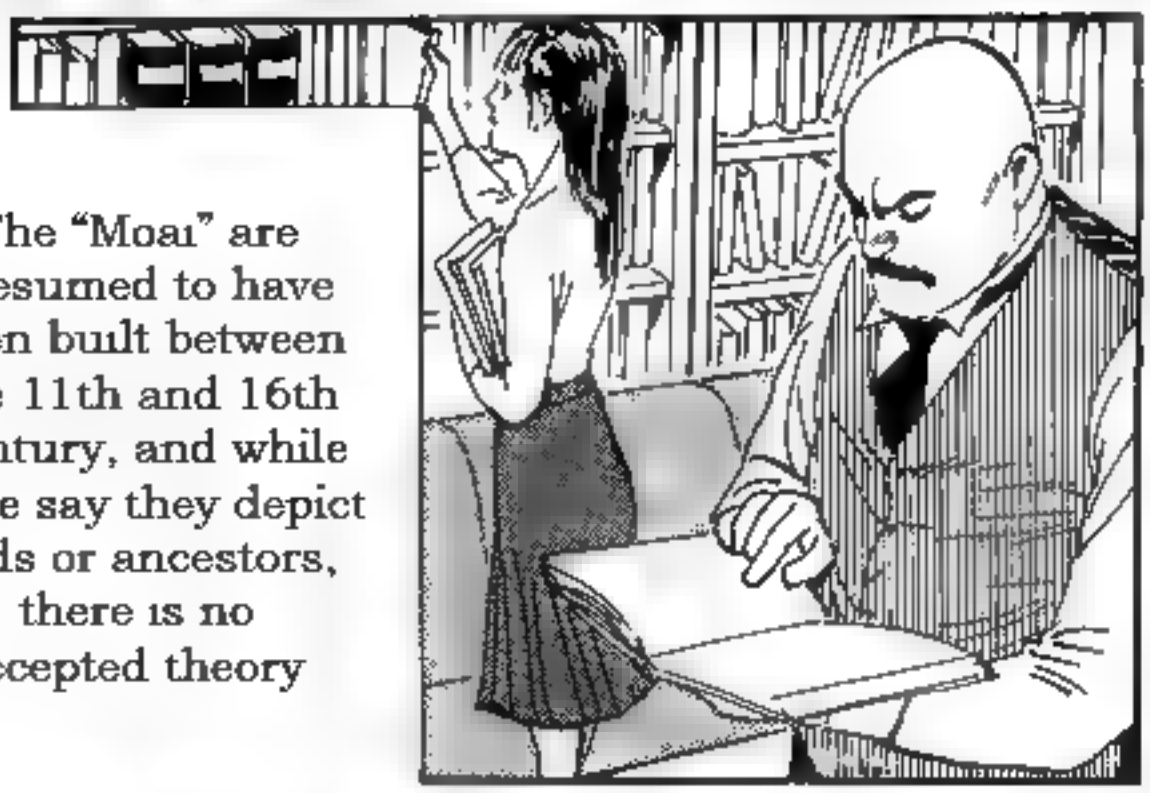
Tokyo

44

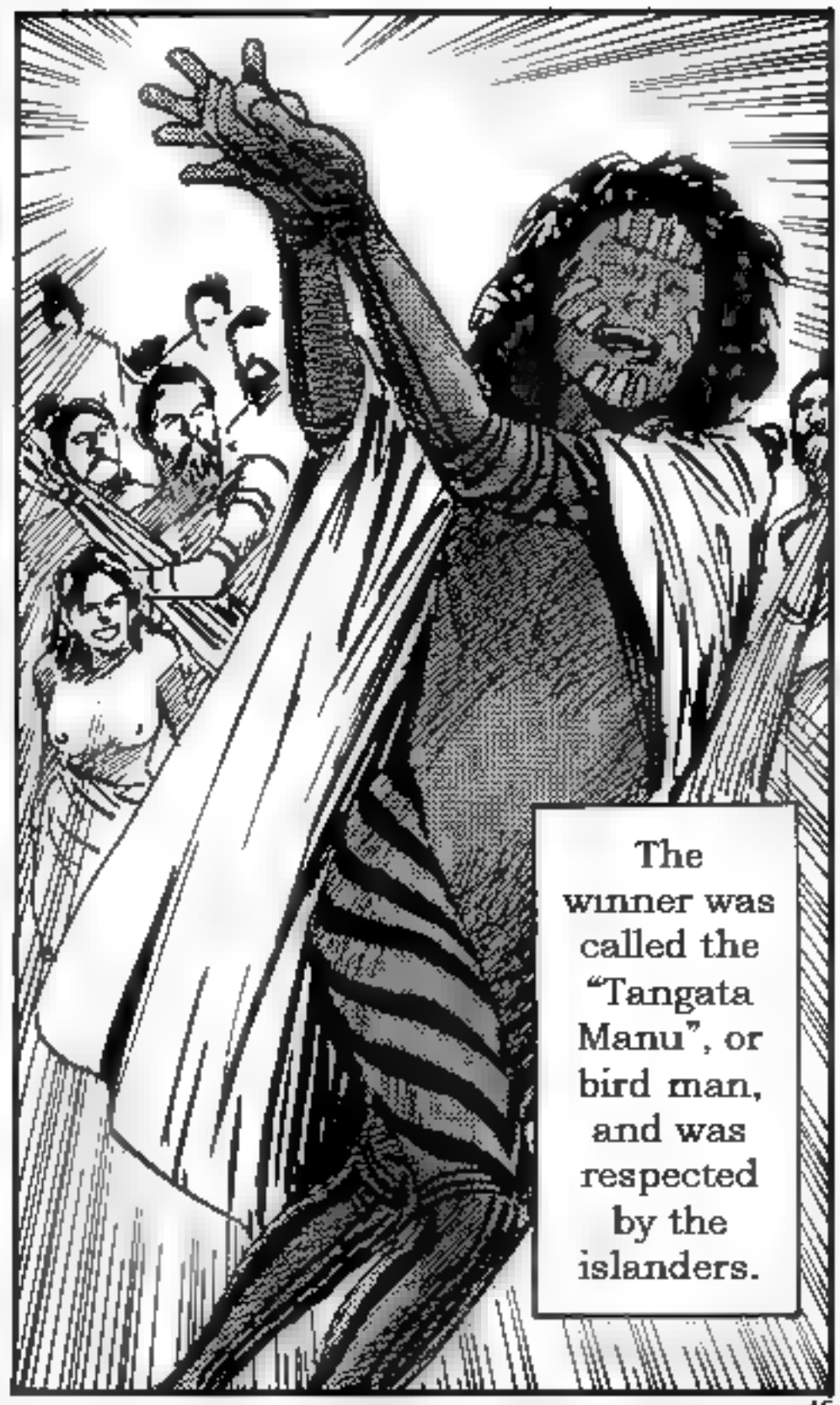
.. There was a "Birdman Ritual" held annually on Easter Island.

The chosen men would swim to an islet, the nesting grounds of a migratory bird, and race to be the first to bring back the first egg that was laid

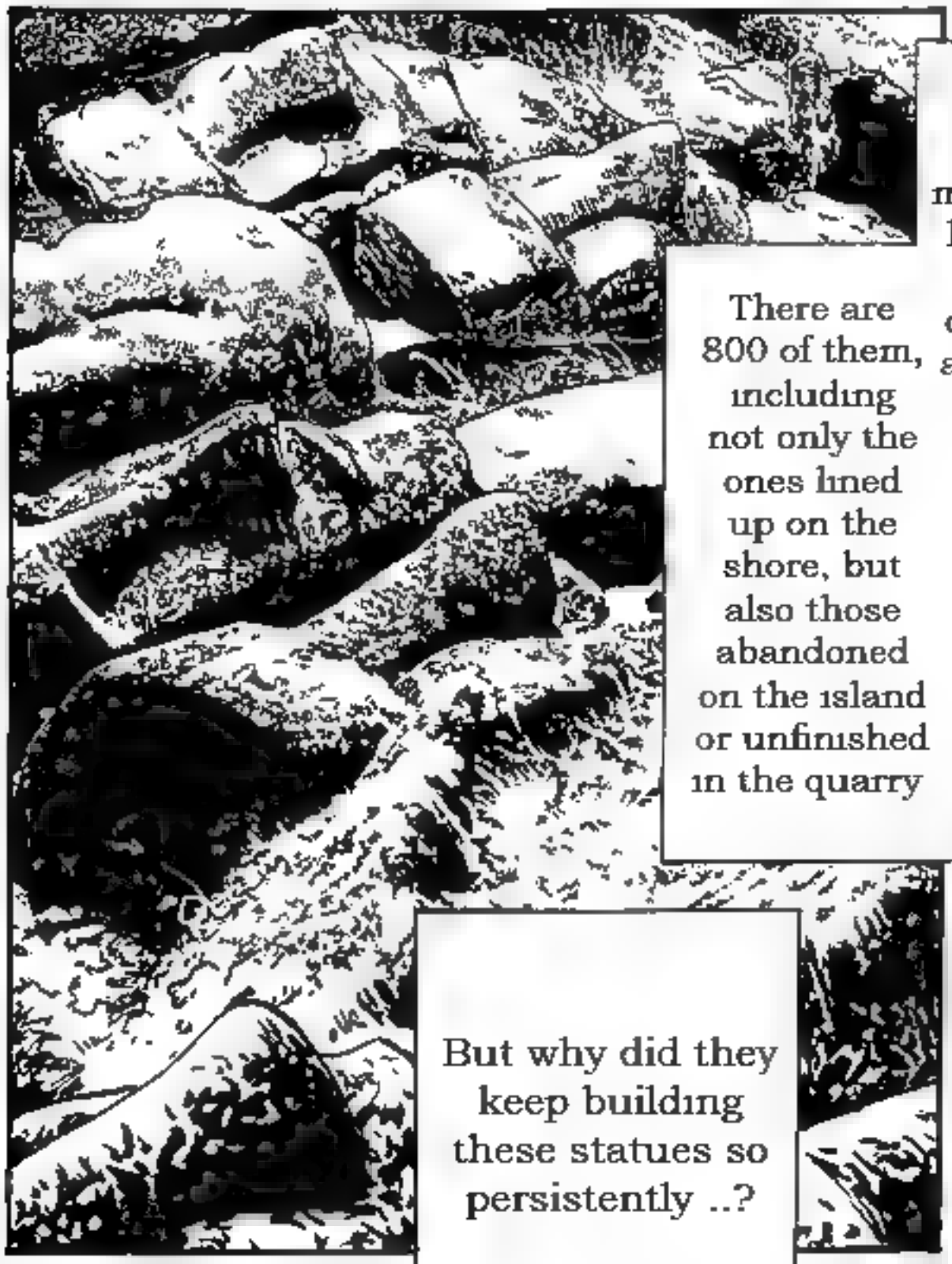




The "Moai" are presumed to have been built between the 11th and 16th Century, and while some say they depict gods or ancestors, there is no accepted theory



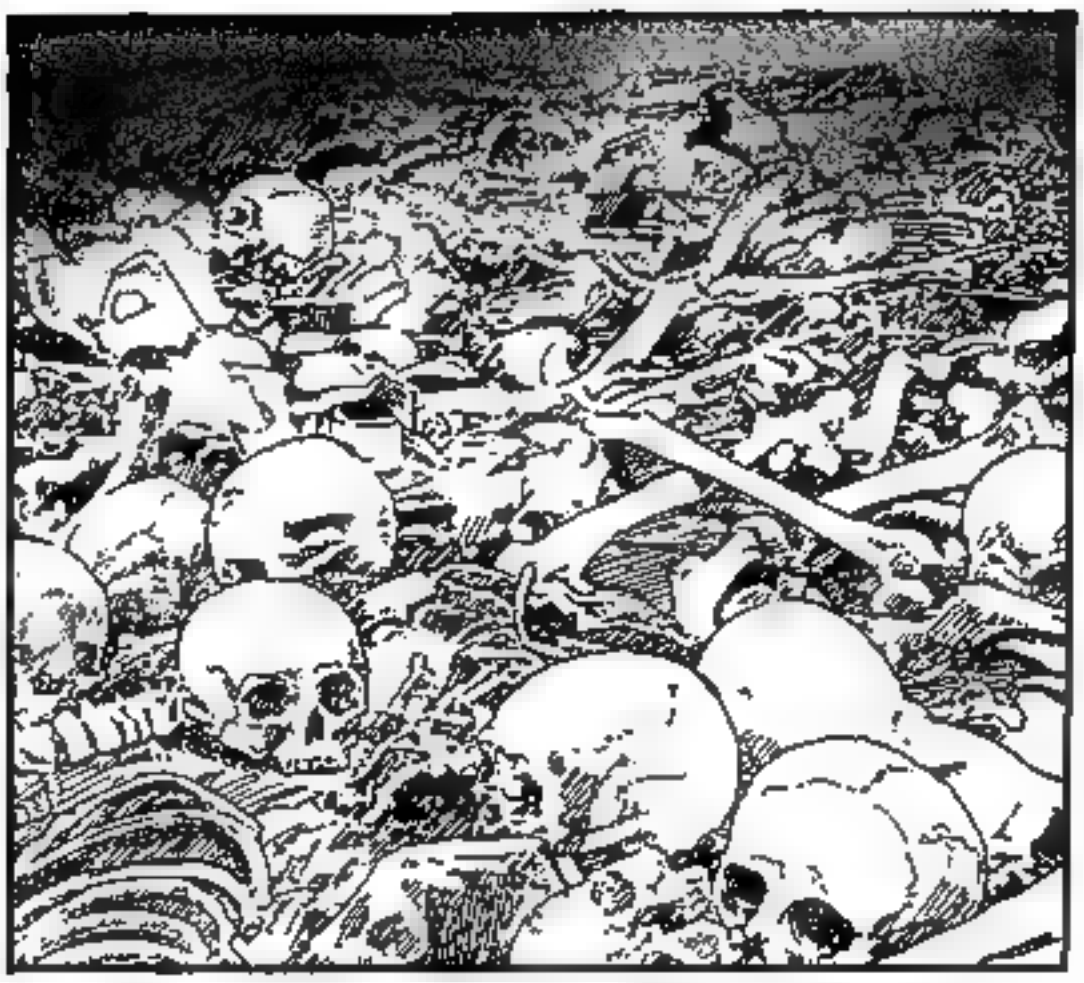
The winner was called the "Tangata Manu", or bird man, and was respected by the islanders.



There are 800 of them, including not only the ones lined up on the shore, but also those abandoned on the island or unfinished in the quarry

Their production may have been halted due to a shortage of the lumber and rope fiber necessary to transport them

But why did they keep building these statues so persistently ..?



By the 18th Century, some of the Europeans who "discovered" Easter Island thought the Moai were "gravestones"

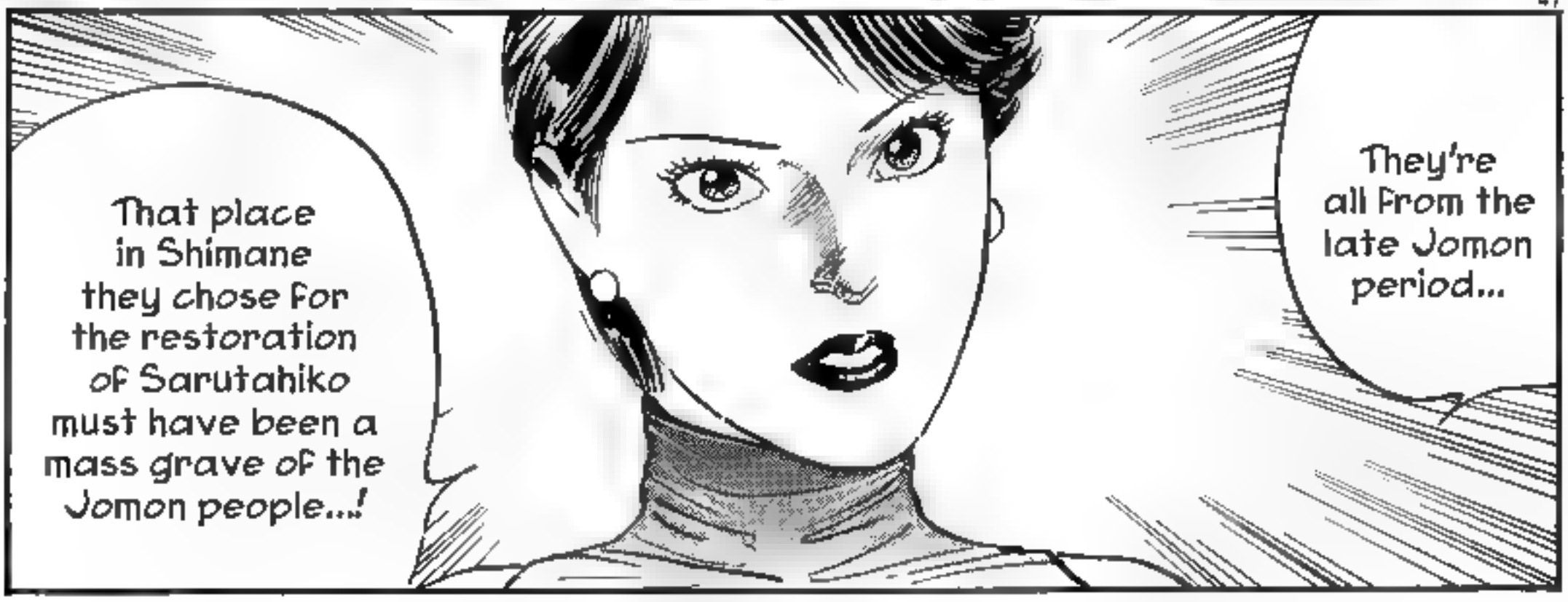
This is because there was there was an abundant number of human bones scattered around the pedestals of the Moai on the shore

Mwah... C... Coming!

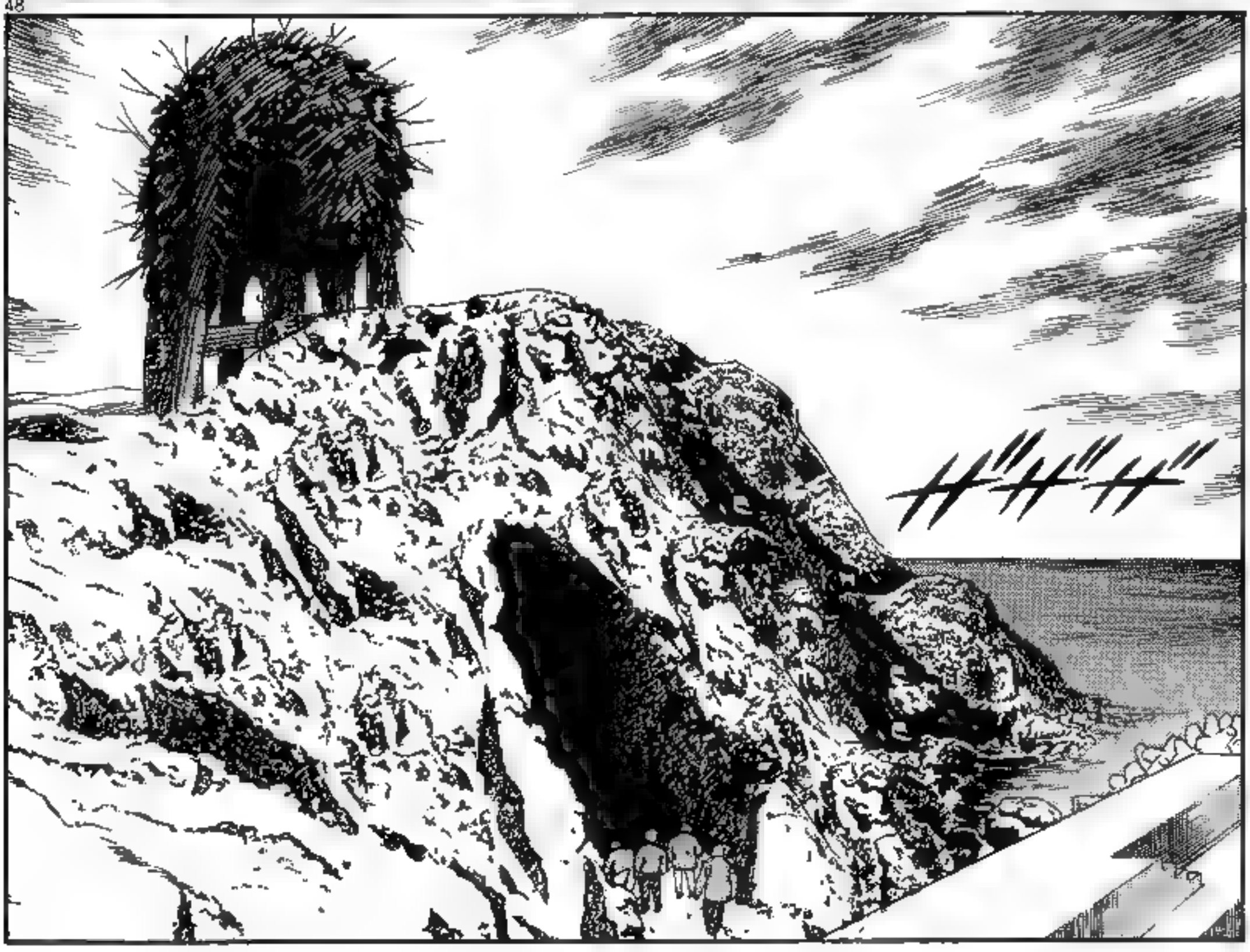
Knock knock

Dr Imibe ...?
W-W-W-What? What are you doing here!?
Hello, Taki. Where's the profes-sor...?

I have the results from the analysis of those bones.


That place in Shimane they chose for the restoration of Sarutahiko must have been a mass grave of the Jomon people...!
They're all from the late Jomon period...

48

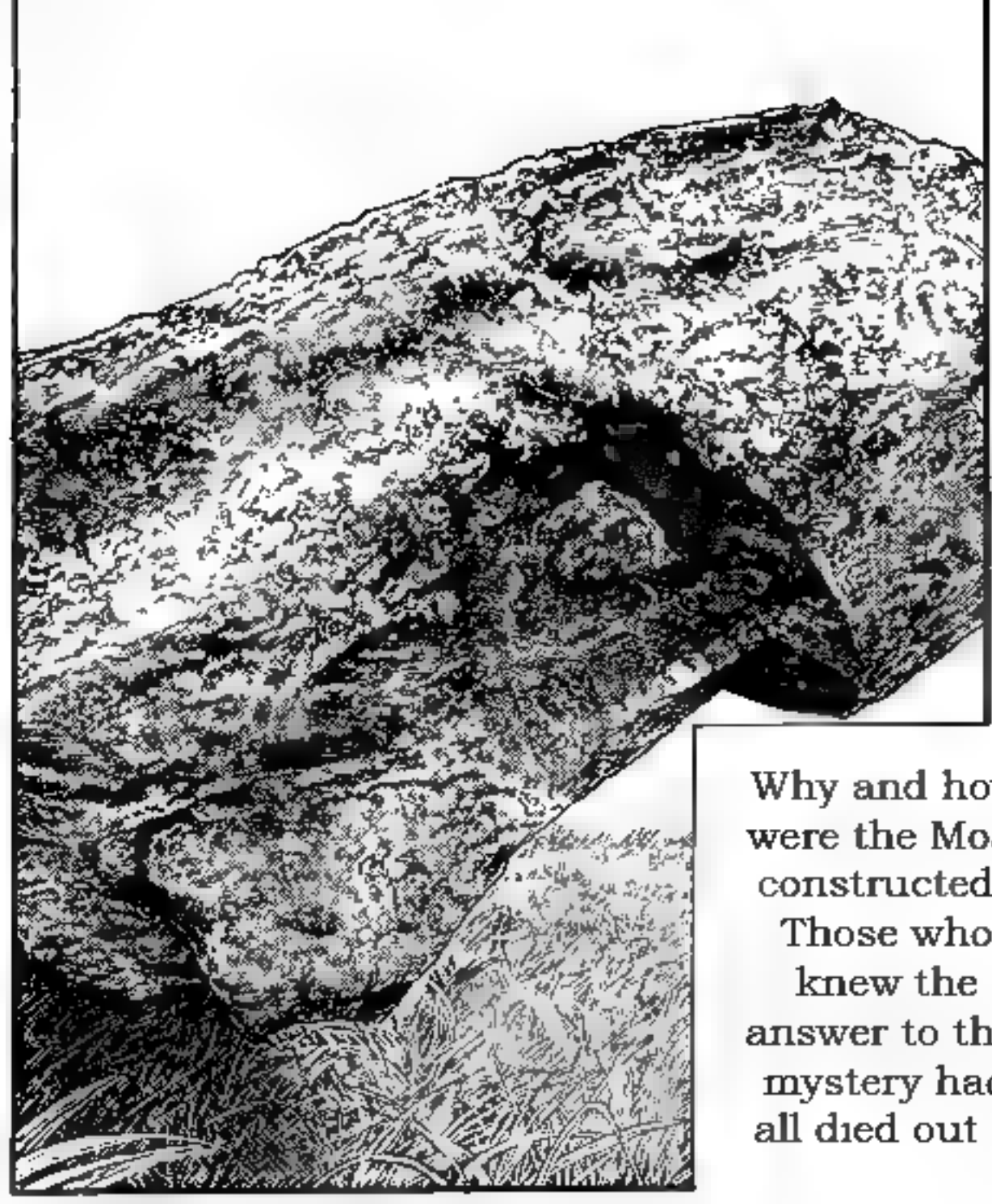


This island was struck by tragedy from the arrival of the [illegible]

[illegible] Nui Easter Island

Slave traders abducted the islanders. Those who returned brought epidemics with them

The islanders who lacked immunity could not resist this disease, and the population dwindled from several thousands to about a hundred



Why and how were the Moai constructed? Those who knew the answer to this mystery had all died out ..

There was a similar incident that occurred during the contact between the Native Americans and the white man...
As well as ancient Japan!

In the late Jomon period, the population of the Japanese archipelago declined from over 16,000 to 7,000 at once.

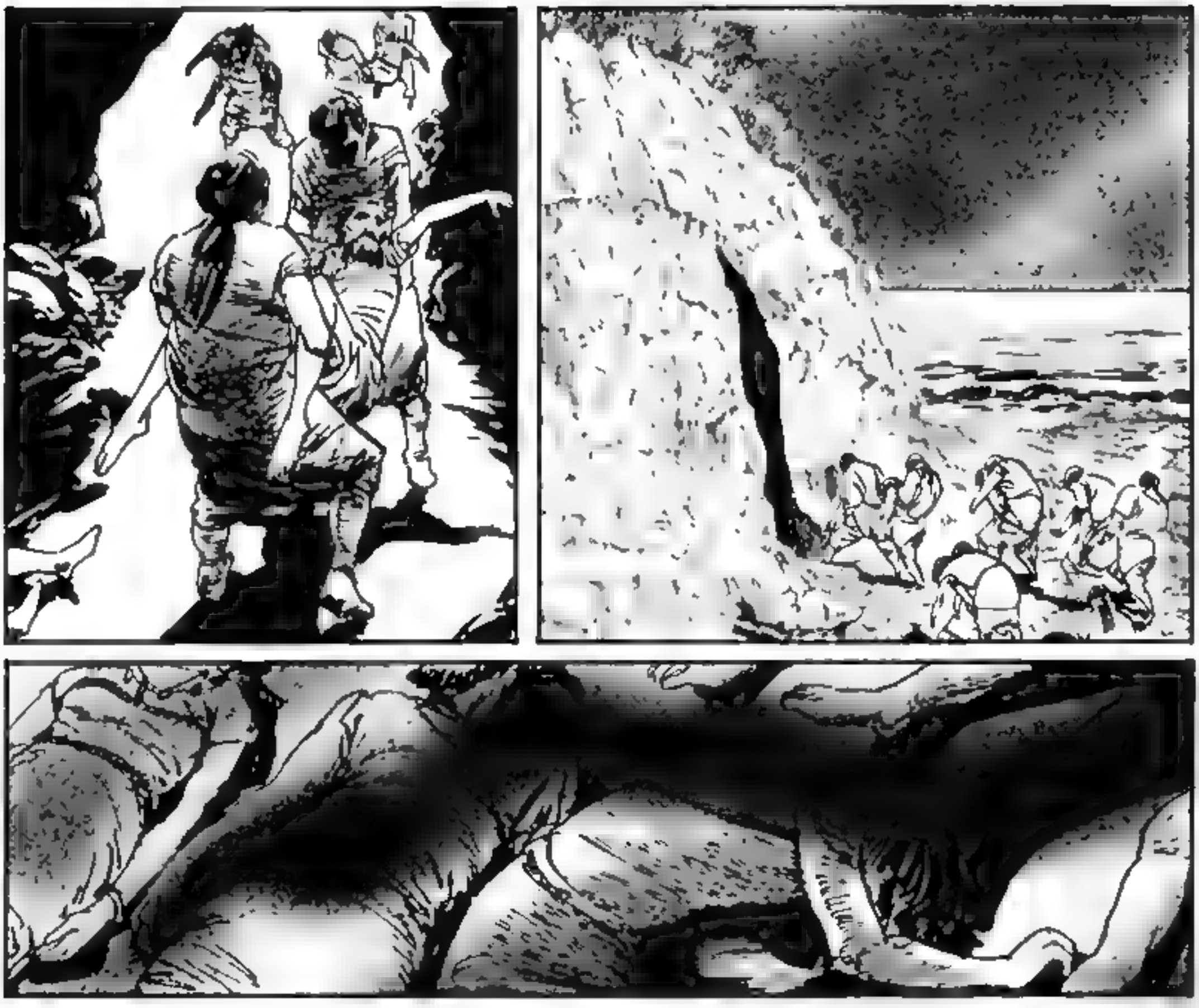
Some say that the cooling climate was a factor...

But the proto-Mongoloid "Jomon people" did not have immunity to those diseases.

But it was then that the "Yayoi people"... a large group of neo-Mongoloids, migrated from the continent, bringing their innate viruses with them.

Bzzzz Bzzzz

Bzzzz...

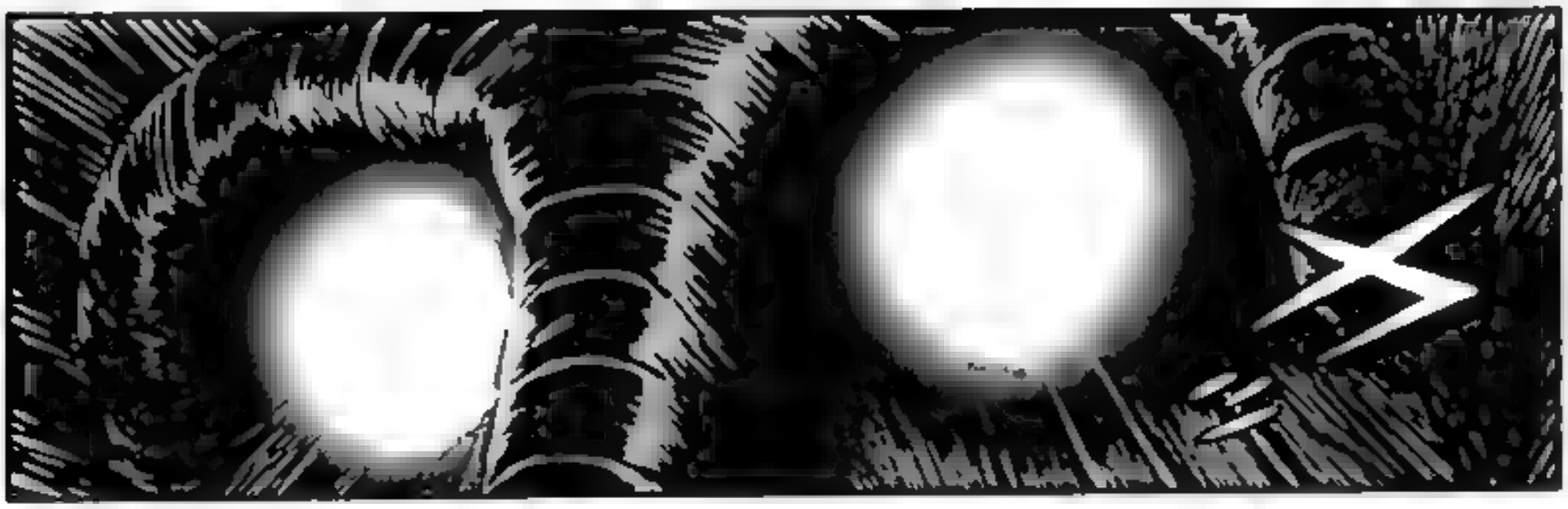


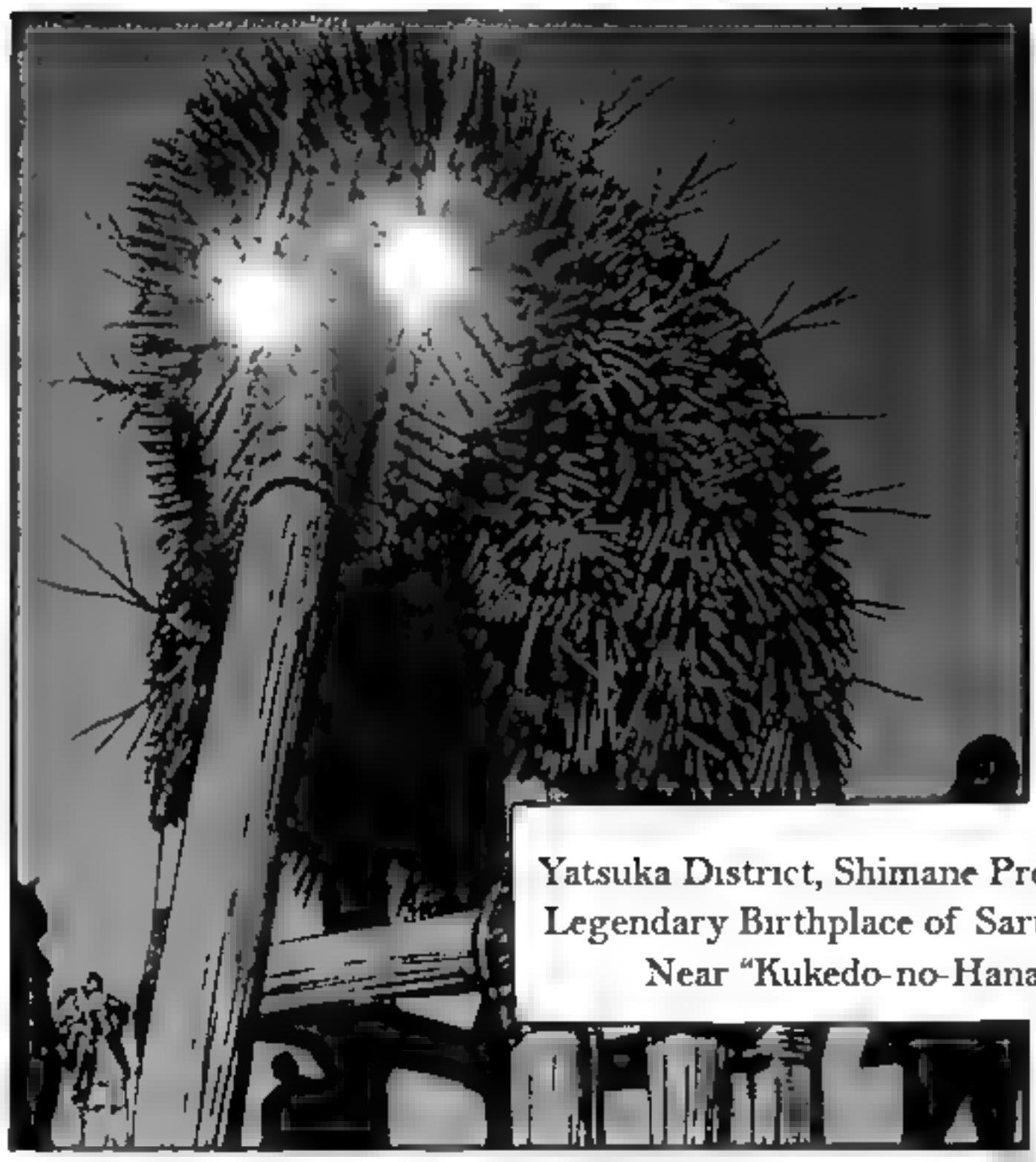
The mass grave we found under the reconstructed Sarutahiko was from about that time period...
If the Jomon cedar pillars are Sarutahiko, as we've imagined...
AND THEY'RE ALL ALONG THE COAST OF THE SEA OF JAPAN... LINED UP FACING THE SEA THAT THE YAYOI MIGRATED FROM...

Omi, Niigata Prefecture
Near Terajı Ruins

Noto, Ishikawa Prefecture
Near Mawaki Ruins

Kanazawa City,
same prefecture
Near Chikamori Ruins





Yatsuka District, Shimane Prefecture
Legendary Birthplace of Sarutahiko
Near "Kukedo-no-Hana"

We'll light it again later when we start the shooting. Where's Shoichiro?

He's at the grave discovery site down below the cliff...

Right ...

But all that said, it's such an inconvenience to have to delay construction on the Sarutahiko area just for an excavation!

We've got a lot of attention and publicity thanks to it, and coincidence or not, we were the ones that discovered it,

There are far more bones in here than in "Inome Cave", also in Izumo.

It looks like the Jomon people intentionally blocked off the entrance to this cave with rocks...

I'm guessing that you had a vague notion that this was the case...

The Jomon people intentionally blocked it off...?

W-W-W-WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING BACK HERE!?

Insuffi-cient!

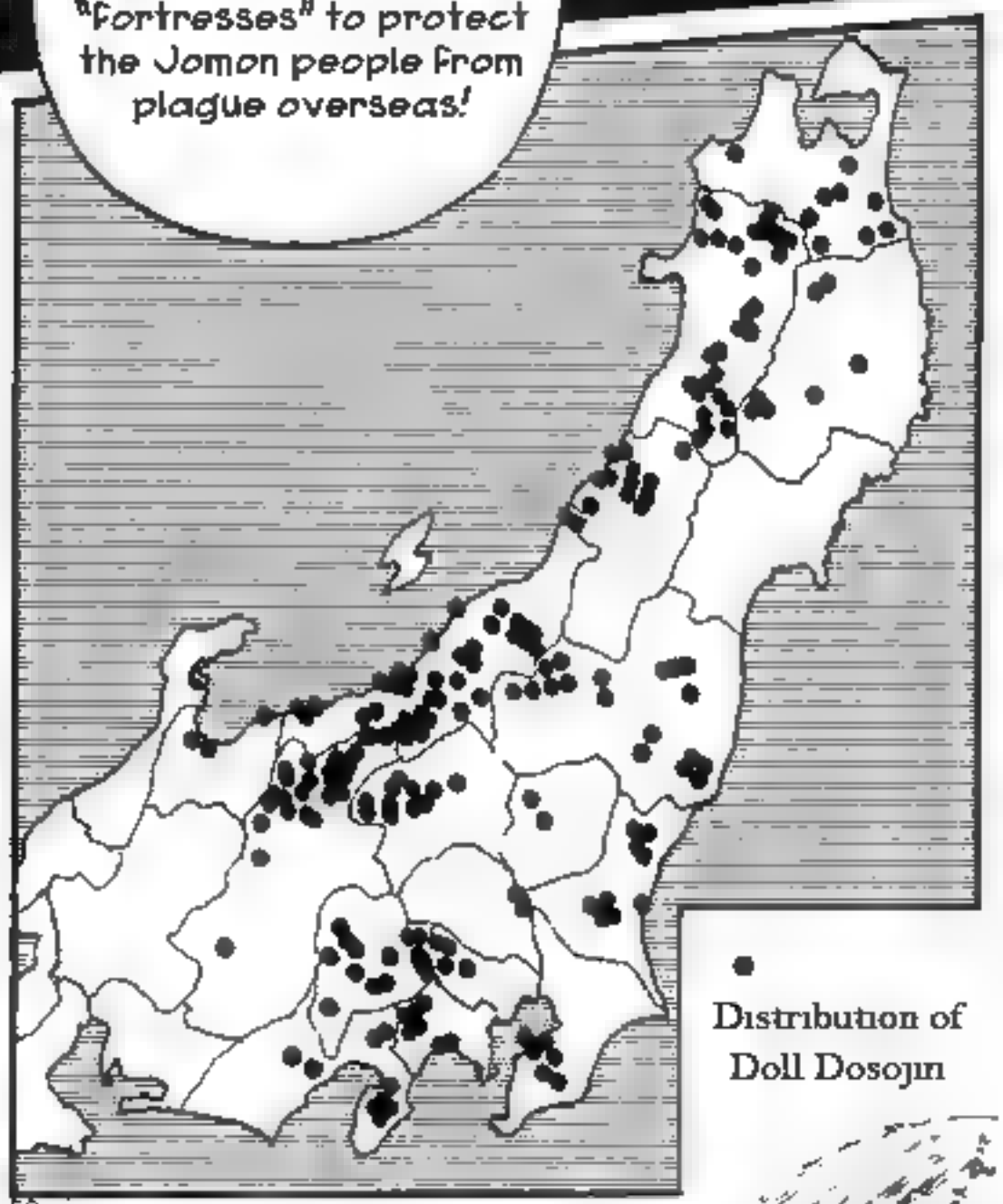
URK!

Sarutahiko is a god that represents borders, and the prototype of the Dosojin... That's what you said, right, Imibe Shoichiro?

THE DOSOJIN IS A "GOD OF BARRIERS"... A GOD THAT BLOCKED THE INFILTRATION OF PLAGUE!

In the late Jomon period, the archipelago's population was overwhelmingly concentrated in East Japan...

And since the Sarutahiko were constructed along the Sea of Japan, the majority would've been "fortresses" to protect the Jomon people from plague overseas!



• Distribution of Doll Dosojin

The Jomon people must have feared the plague to the extent that they built miniature Sarutahikos - the Dosojin - in the villages and settlements between the mountains.

That may be the reason that the belief in Sarutahiko remained so widespread and deeply rooted throughout all of Japan, even to the present day.

THEY WERE NOT GODS MEANT TO WELCOME AND GUIDE THE FOR-EIGNERS!
THEY WERE GODS MEANT TO INTIMIDATE THEM AND FORBID THEIR ENTRY!

The "Yatsumata-no-Sarutahiko"... What the Yayoi people witnessed as they settled on the archipelago was no more than an eerie statue standing on the cape.

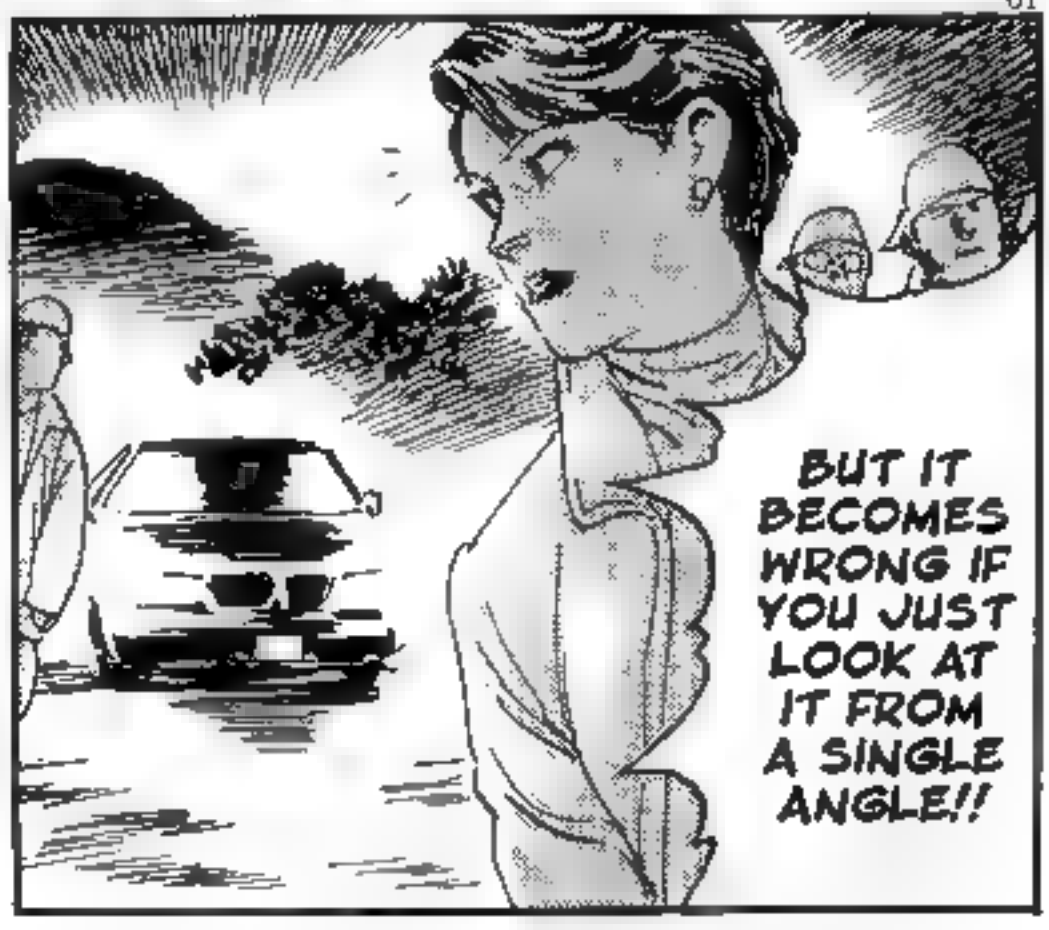
The myth in which the Provincial Gods Onamuchi and Sarutahiko yielded the nation to the Celestial Gods so easily is a reflection of the Jomon people's decline.

THAT'S NOT GOING TO FIT MR. HASHIBA'S IMAGE OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC TOUR, AND HE'LL STOP FUNDING US!

YOU CAN'T TELL ME THAT SARUTA-HIKO HAS SUCH A DARK IMAGE!!

Y...

THE GODS ARE A MULTIFACETED IMAGE OF THE OVERLAPPING OF COUNTLESS TRADITIONS! IMIBE KANA'S INTERPRETATION IS CORRECT, AND YOUR THEORY MAY NOT BE WRONG, EITHER...
I'M TELLING YOU THAT YOU CAN'T SIMPLIFY THE PERSONALITY OF THE GODS TO SUIT YOUR OWN CONVENIENCES!!


BUT IT BECOMES WRONG IF YOU JUST LOOK AT IT FROM A SINGLE ANGLE!!

C...CAN-
CELLED!?

So if we start a tour through the South Pacific islands, they'll probably turn us away at the ports, and the disease will infect the passengers. We can't afford to be liable for a worst-case scenario happening.
It's because of the new strain of influenza.
They say that if it becomes an epidemic, it'll spread from Asia to the world in the blink of an eye, and a lot of people will die...

62

The company has decided to freeze this project for a year or two while this dies down. I'm so sorry!

INFECTIONS
IN INDONESIA
AND CHINA
H5N1
STRAIN
NEW STRAIN OF INFLUENZA
ONLY A MATTER OF TIME UNTIL EPIDEMIC

64

BIRD FLU
INFECTING
HUMANS

Y...
YOU
DON'T
MEAN
...

.....

WHOA
...!?
AHHHH!!

I hate to
break this to
you, but there
are means
of exchange
with Polynesia
besides
just luxury
cruises...

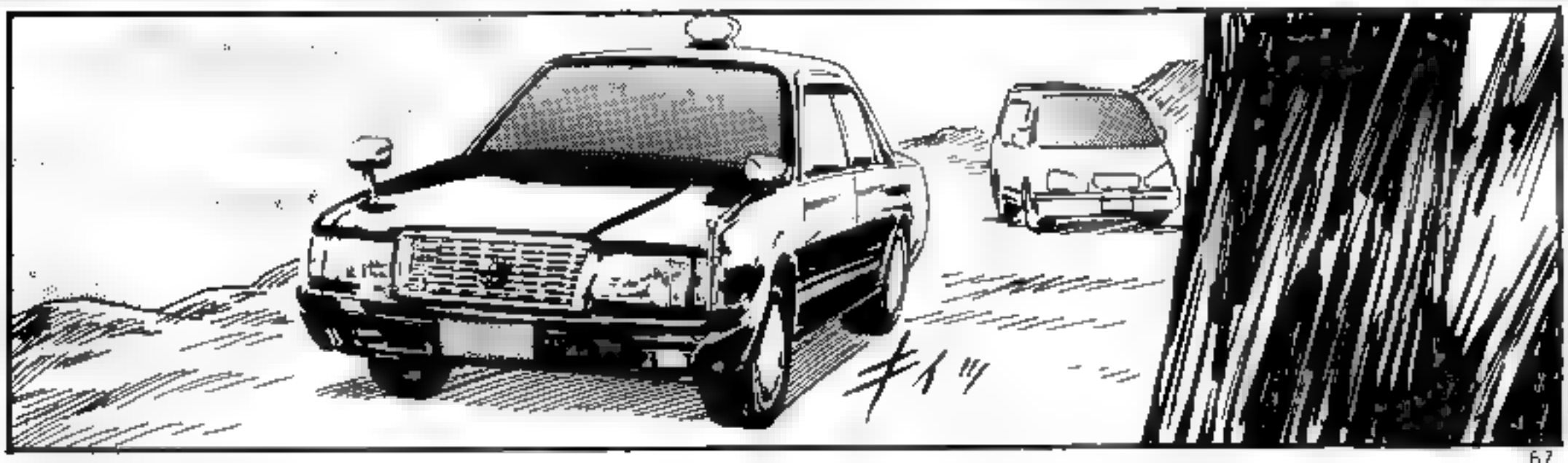
DIDN'T YOU PUT OUT THE FIRE!?

I...I DID! THAT'S ODD...

IT'S BURNING BECAUSE YOU SCREWED IT UP! CALL THE FIRE DEPARTMENT, MORON!

D...DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT! THE SARUTAHIKO IN OTHER REGIONS ARE JUST CONCRETE DUMMIES, BUT THIS WAS BUILT FROM LUMBER I IMPORTED FROM TAIWAN!
IT COST ME A HUNDRED MILLION YEN!!

IT'S TOO LATE...!



67

THAT'S ANOTHER TV PROJECT GONE UP IN SMOKE! LAUGH ALL YOU WANT!
Mr. Hashiba went home with his tail between his legs, and the people from the TV station left after filing the police report. I'm just staying here to comfort him.

So you're still here after all...

It may have been a fool's errand to connect Sarutahiko to the Moai, but that's not to say they had no points in common.

Oh, don't be so down. I'll give you a consolation prize.

Gods of barriers ...?

The Moai may have also been "gods of barriers", erected to prevent the invasion of plague

It is hardly usual for an island with a population in the thousands to construct well over 800 stone statues, to the point that it exhausts their resources.

It's as if they were trying to block off the entire island with Moai...

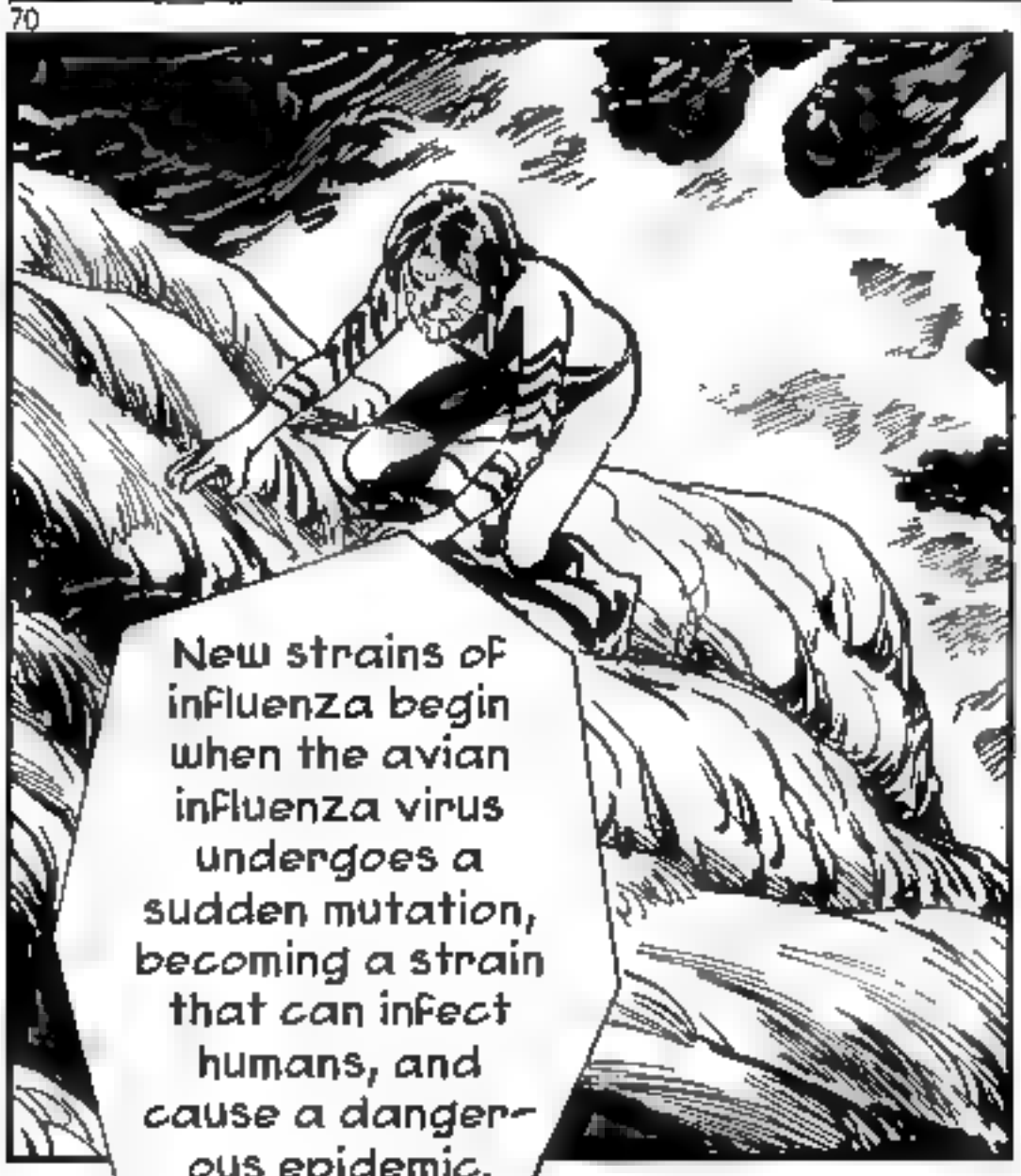
W...WAIT JUST A SECOND! THIS ISN'T ADDING UP!

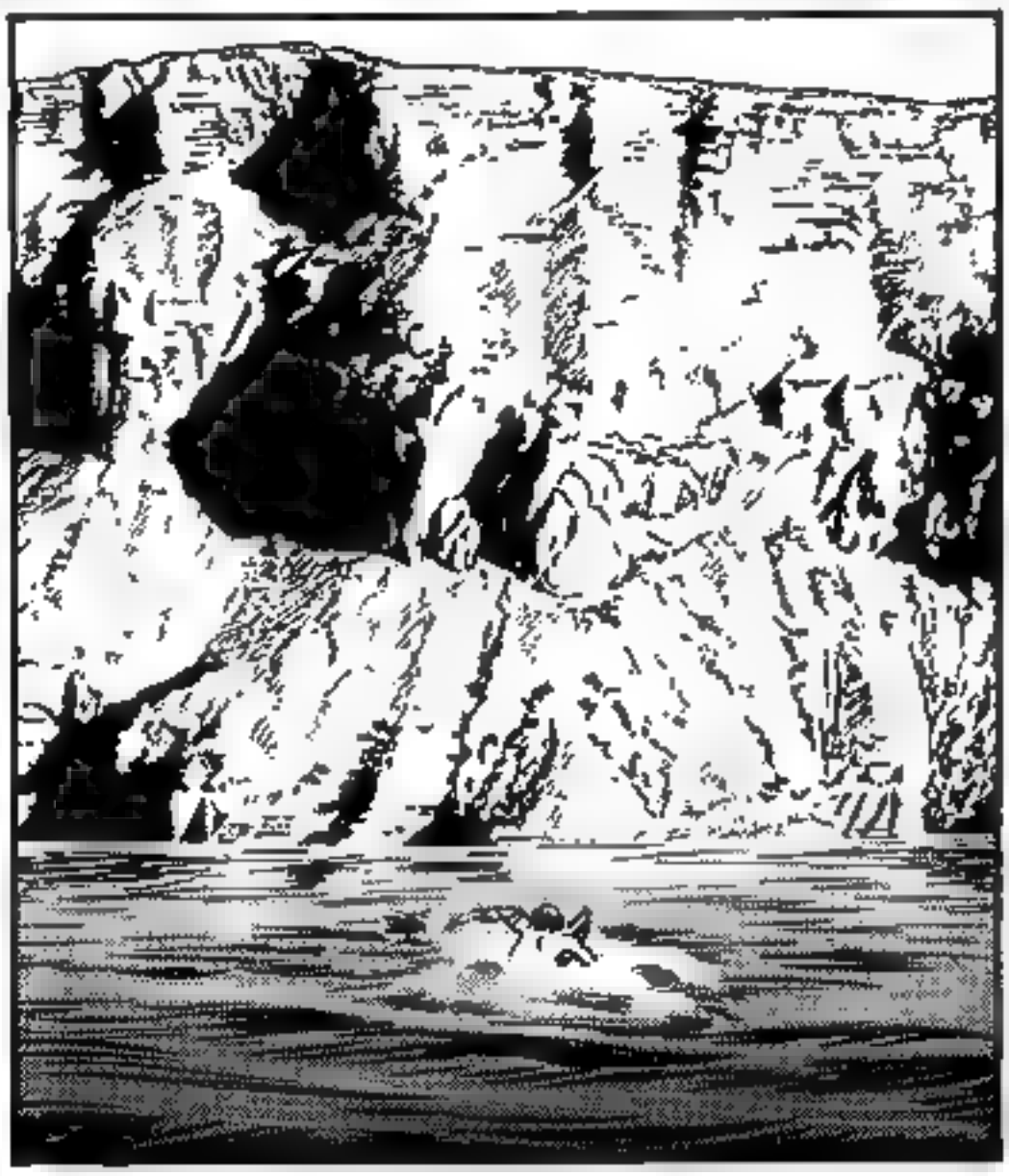
Because the people of Easter Island were crushed by the plague from the sea, just like the Jomon people...!?

They may not have been human...

THE MOAI WERE CONSTRUCTED FROM THE 9TH TO 16TH CENTURY! THAT'S CENTURIES BEFORE THE EUROPEAN SHIPS CAME AND SPREAD THEIR DISEASES!

SO WHO WOULD'VE BROUGHT DISEASE TO THAT ISOLATED ISLAND SO LONG AGO...!?


New strains of influenza begin when the avian influenza virus undergoes a sudden mutation, becoming a strain that can infect humans, and cause a danger-ous epidemic.



The "Spanish flu", an early 20th-century epidemic that caused millions of deaths worldwide, was determined by decoding the viral DNA collected from an infected person buried in permafrost to be a strain of avian influenza that mutated to a human strain.

These phenomena occur once every few decades, and it is estimated that they have occurred repeatedly throughout history...

IF this becomes an epidemic among humans, the estimated number of patients is 25 million in Japan alone. Please exercise sufficient caution...

Due to fact that migratory birds can be carriers of the virus, there is a risk that such strains can be spread from the Pacific Rim to Asia, Siberia, and Europe.

And yet people still have no choice but to cling to the gods...

Sarutahiko died at sea...

H" H" H"

THE OAKE RECORDS OF PROFESSOR MIYAMA

CHAPTER 11

PRESENTED BY

HOKUTO NO GUN

TRANSLATED BY

SYSTEMATICCHAOS

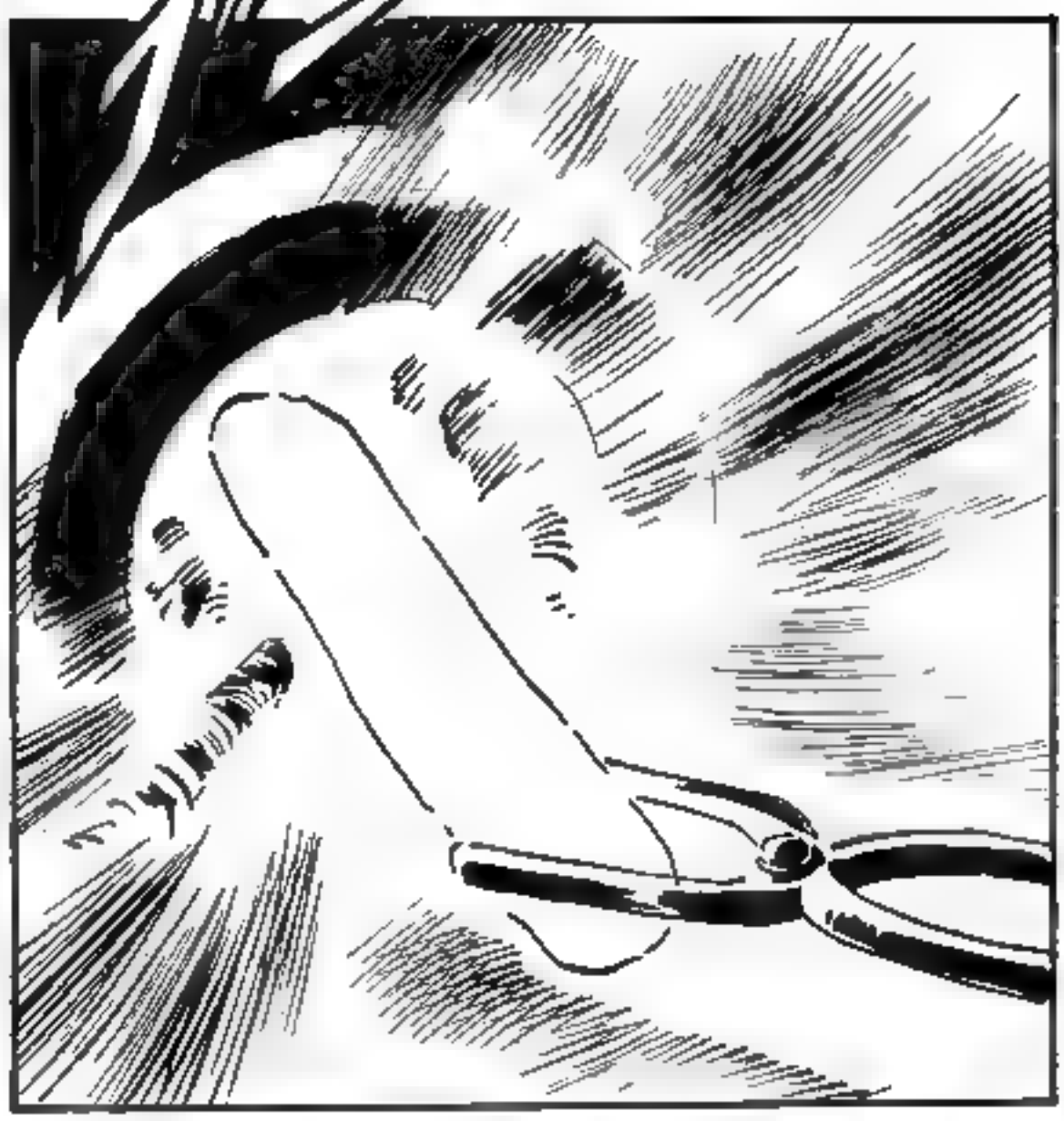
EDITING BY

HIGHTIDE AND KAZUHIKO

PROOFREADING BY

DESTORYERRING

CHAPTER 12:
EMPIRE OF IRON



Munakata District,
Fukuoka Prefecture

4

Auxiliary of
Munakata Grand Shrine
Amateru Hoakari Shrine

Sis!

Taki!

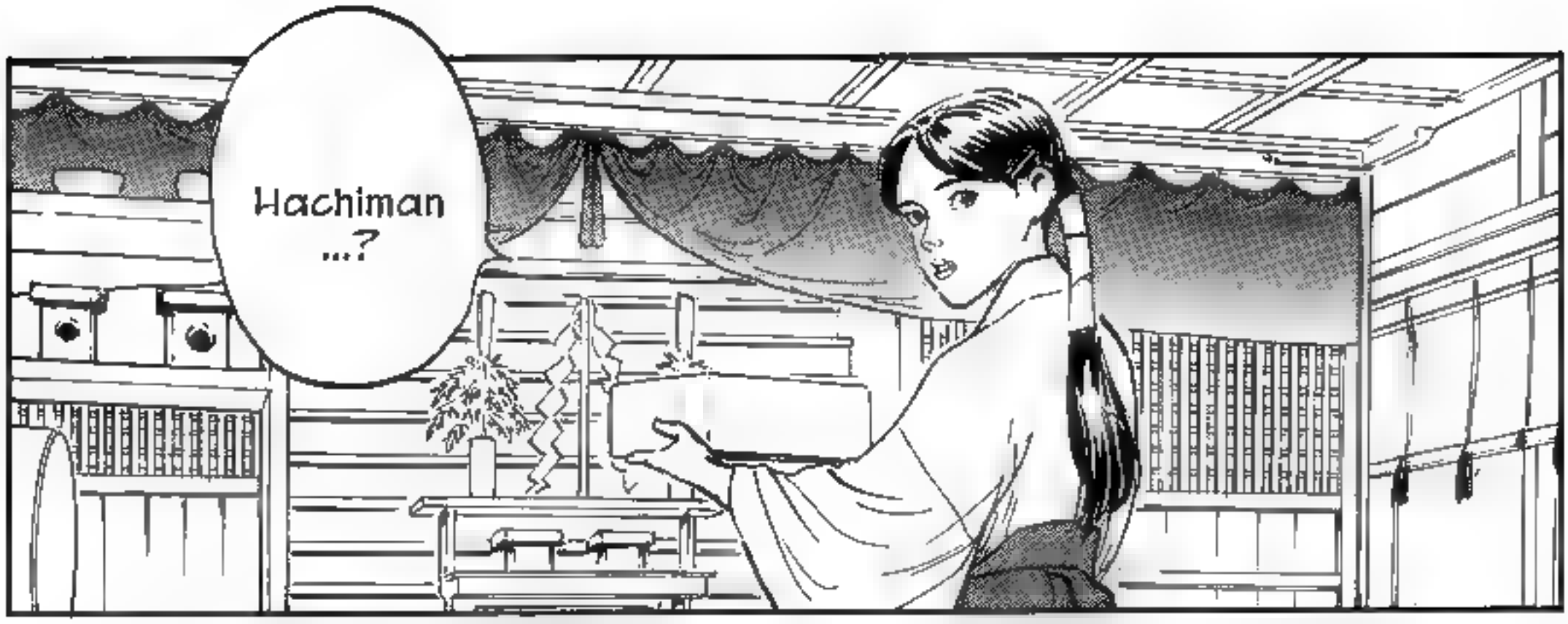
I had the opportunity to come here to Kyushu, so I thought I'd finish my business quickly and drop by here.

Is that so, Uncle...

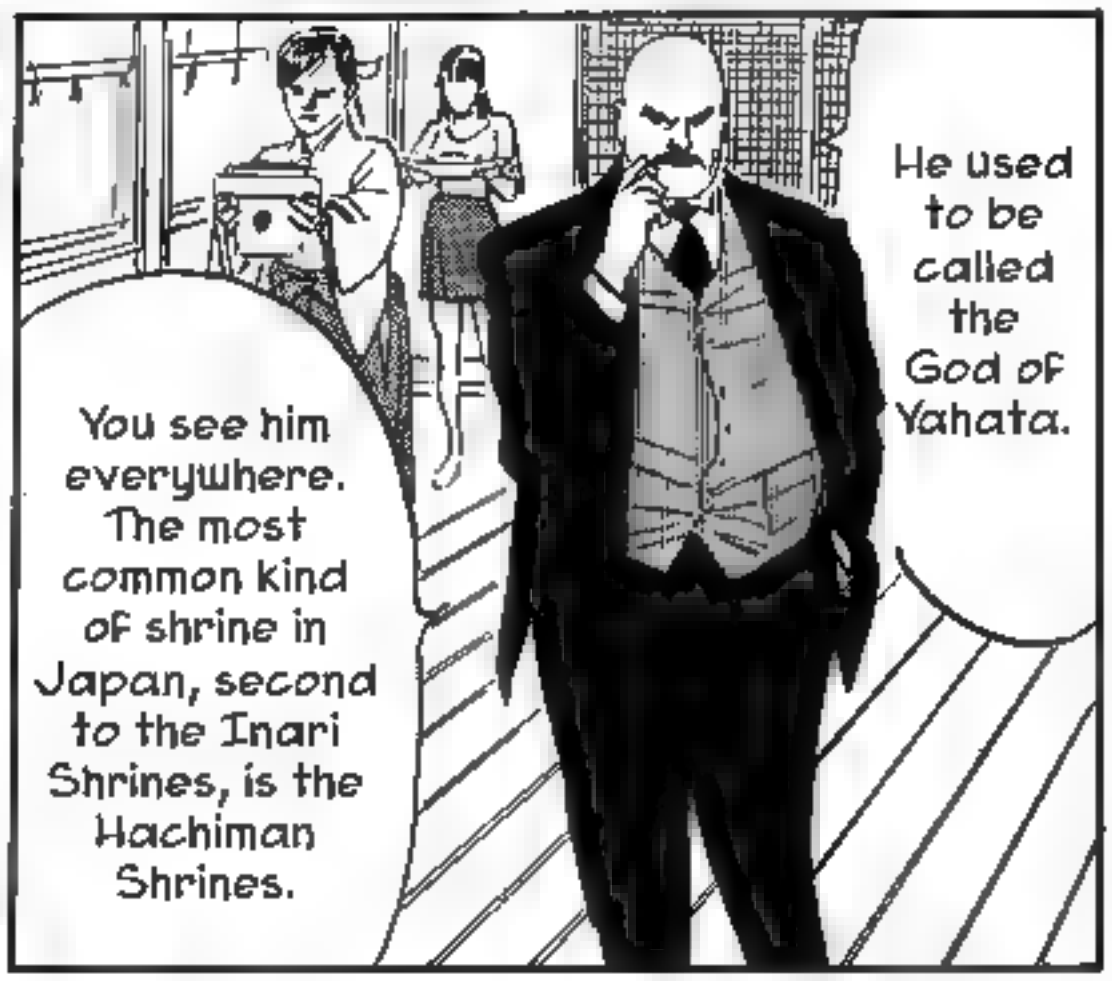
Itsuki, Tagiri, you seem to be doing well. I'm glad you two are taking care of the shrine...

I...I have! I'm just rebounding ...

Look at you go, Taki. I bet you haven't gone on a diet, have you?


Hachiman ...?

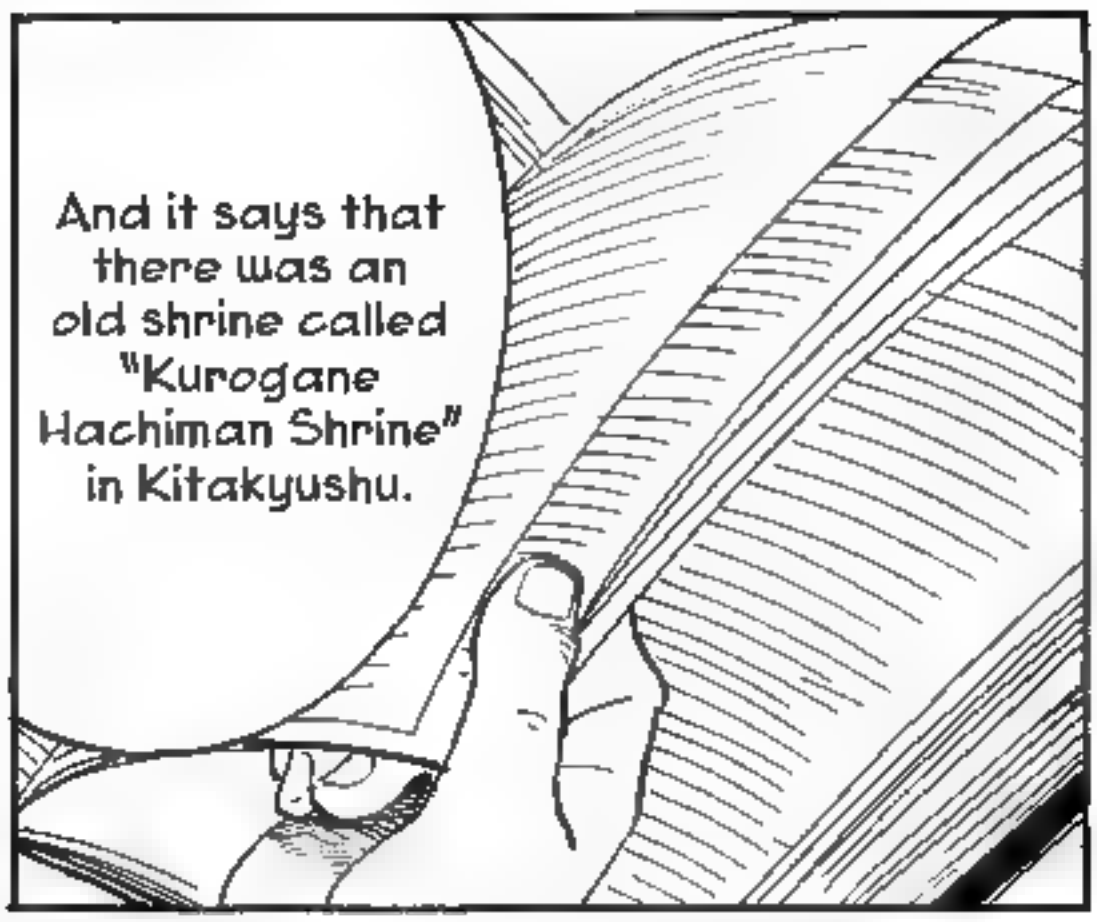
But given how ubiquitous he is, he's a god of many mysteries.


You see him everywhere. The most common kind of shrine in Japan, second to the Inari Shrines, is the Hachiman Shrines.
He used to be called the God of Yahata.

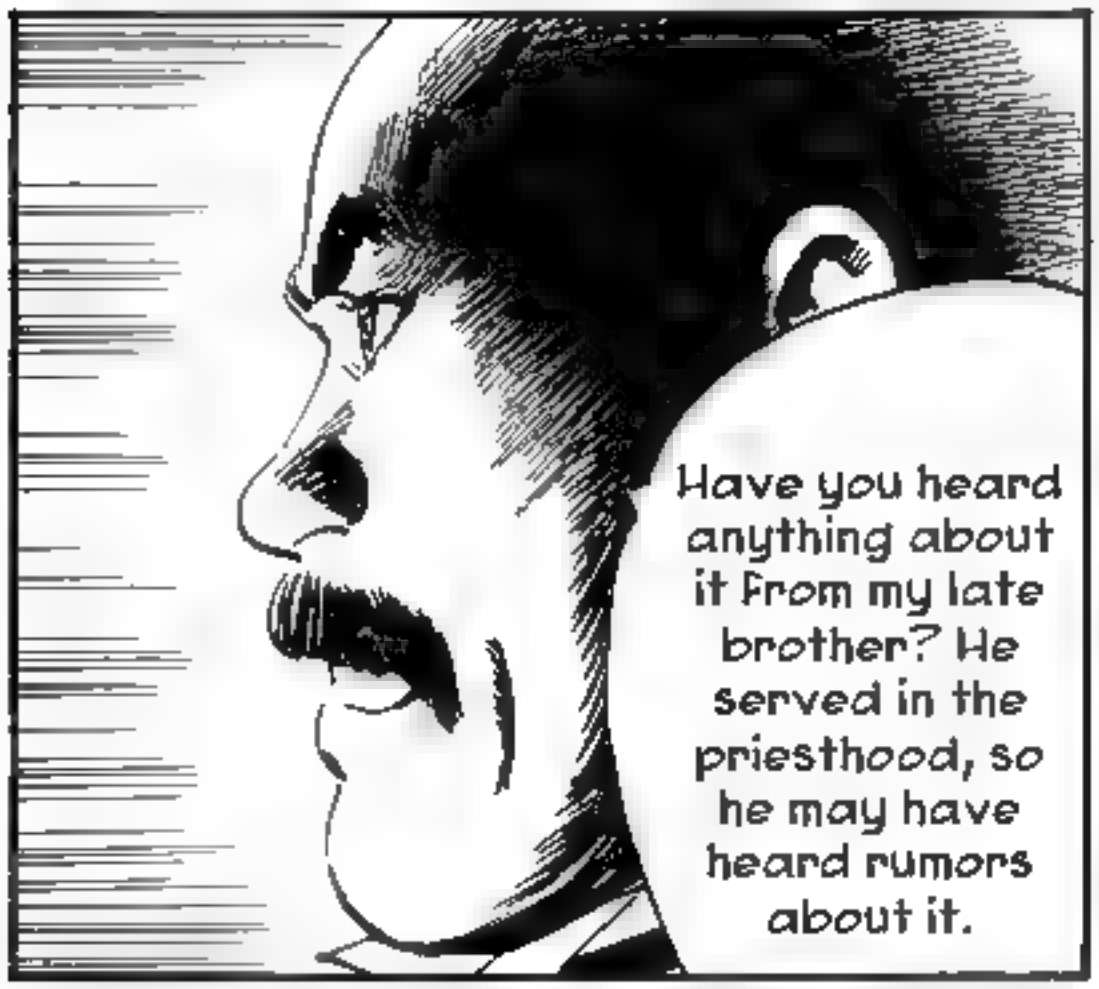
6

Since there's a theory that Hachiman is related to iron or blacksmiths, I can't just ignore him...
My specialist theme is the spread of "iron" civilization.

80



Kurogane Hachiman Shrine
Near Kitakyushu City?



I don't know if this is the shrine you're asking about...

Well...

But he did once say that there was a strange shrine in the prefecture. I think...

he said it was a shrine built underground...

He never said its name or location... But I think it was connected to the "Usa Hachiman Shrine" in the neighboring prefecture of Oita.

Underground ...!?

I was intending to visit it sooner or later, as long as I'm thinking about Hachiman...

Usa Hachiman is the original Hachiman Shrine...

But tonight's a special night. Let's go out to Hakata for some good food!

Yes.

So are we going to Usa tomorrow, Uncle?

YEA AAH HHH HHH !!

Usa Hachiman Shrine,
Oita Prefecture

That's some pretty vermillion lacquer...

The first part of the main hall enshrines Emperor Ojin, and the second part the Great Goddess Himeno.

Now the Great Goddess Himeno is a mysterious goddess, but one theory says that she is one of the "Three Goddesses of Munakata".

Some say that Emperor Ojin was deified as Hachiman, and others think that the Great Goddess Himeno was the original enshrined deity, and Hachiman came later.

Oh...

Takirihime, Ichikishimahime, and Takitsuhime are the goddesses of the Munakata Clan. They are related to us, as well...

Hachiman's origin states that he appeared by the side of Lake Hishigata in the form of an old blacksmith.

In the early 8th Century, the Yamato Administration ordered an army from North Kyushu to suppress the Hayato of South Kyushu for their frequent rebellions.

They say he was an unruly god who had eight heads, and slayed all those who came near

The North Kyushu army, mostly consisting of settlers from the Joseon Peninsula, built "Karakuni Castle" in Osumi.

This incident became symbolized by the God Yahata... The name Yahata comes from "Eight Streams of Flags", meaning an army with many standards.

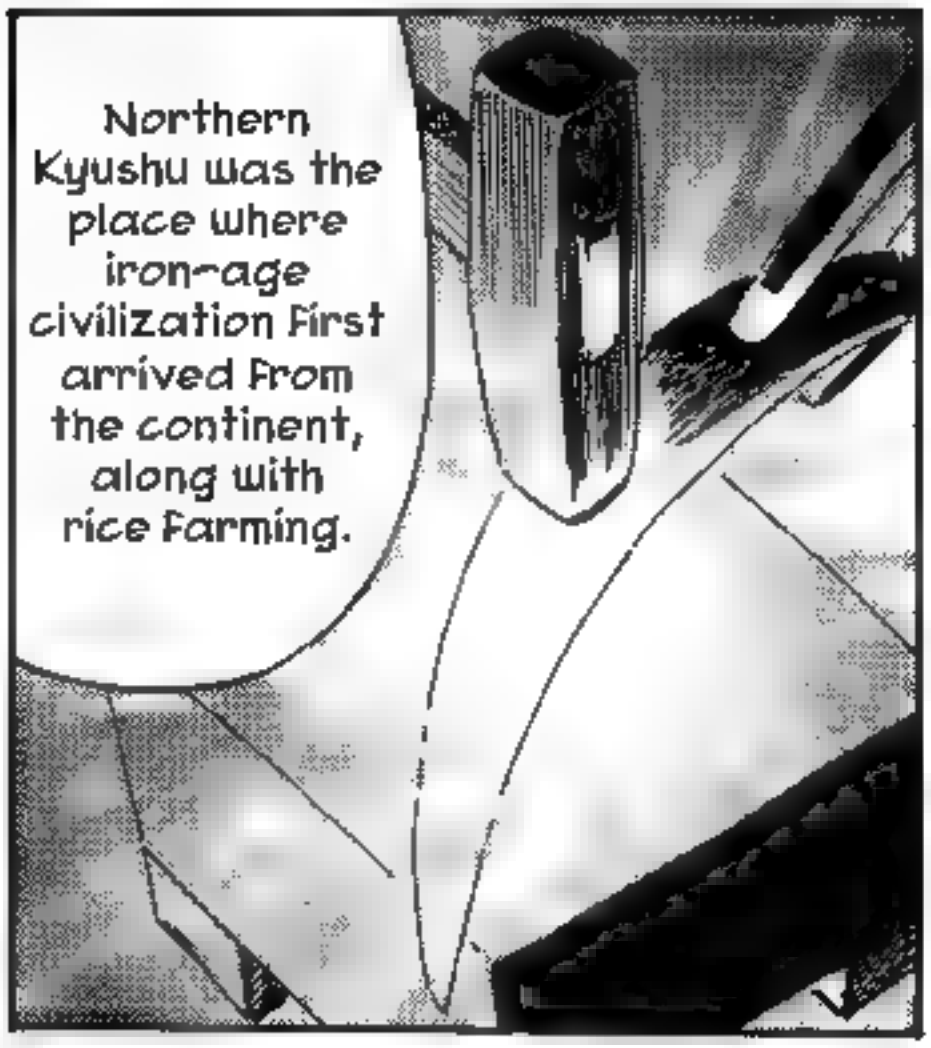
They later sent Sho Hachiman Shrine here... which is now Kagoshima Hachiman Shrine.

They drew in the settlers to force the indigenous Hayato to submit.

Some say that the "Release of Captured Animals" ritual, still held at the Usa Hachiman Shrine, is a ritual where they release fish and shellfish to atone for the sin of slaughtering the Hayato.

The name Hachiman spread throughout the nation laten in the mid-8th Century...

Right when they were building a massive bronze Buddha in Nara!


Northern Kyushu was the place where iron-age civilization first arrived from the continent, along with rice farming.

Artisans such as ironworkers and blacksmiths must have settled as well, to produce the iron equipment necessary for agriculture, such as sickles and hoes.

15

And these artisans were quite often shamans as well!

Usa Hachiman was a god that gave oracles through the shamans, and he pleased the current emperor Shomu with his sudden oracle to support the construction of the Great Buddha.

The immigrant workers, skilled in metal refinement, assembled into a national industry.

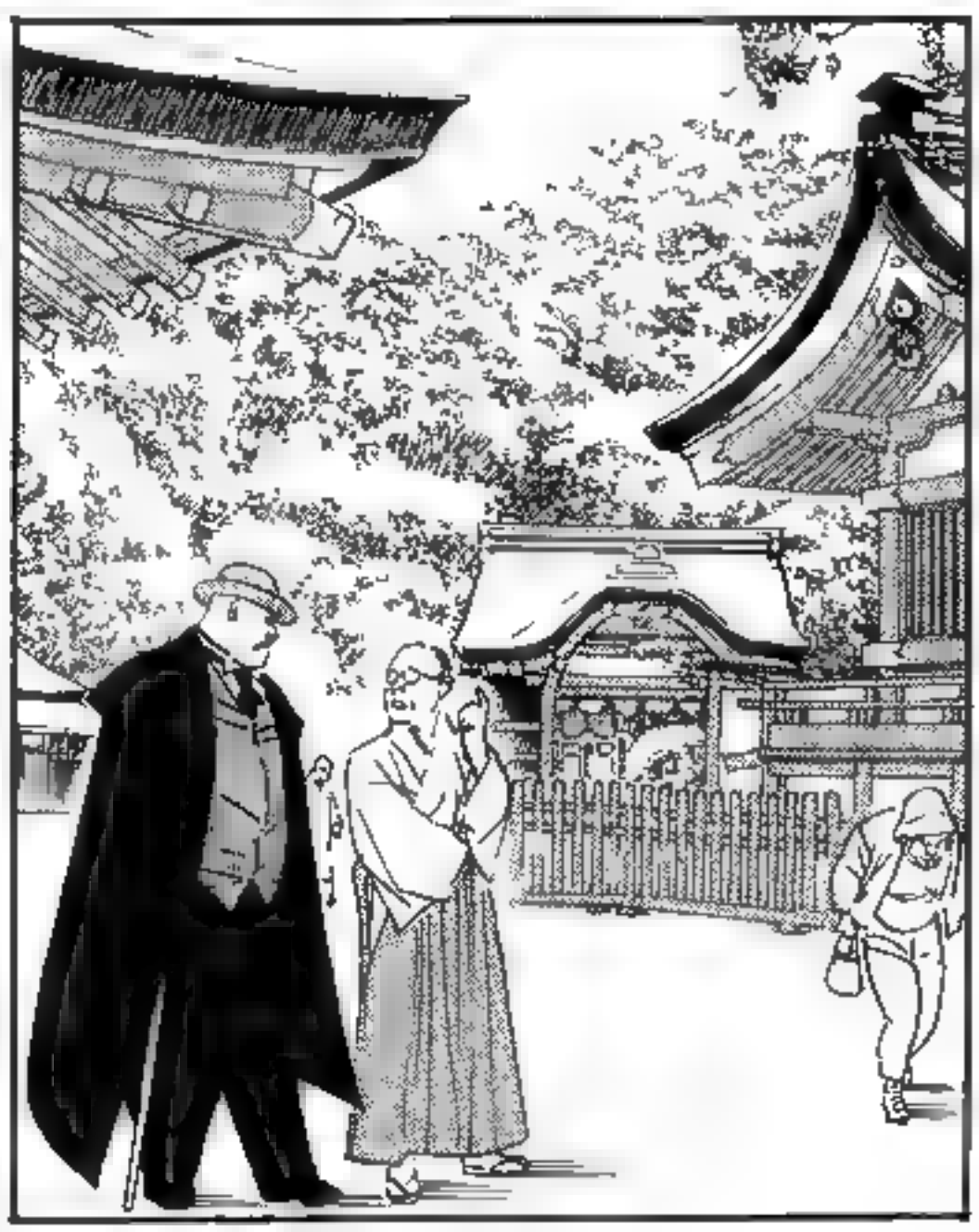
This was a power assembled under the name of Hachiman.

The priestess of Usa was invited to the ceremony, and worshipped the Great Buddha.

By this rite, Hachiman accepted the Buddha on behalf of the gods of Japan.

This would lead to him being known as "Bodhisattva Hachiman", guardian deity of Buddhism and the State.

"Saido-
sho"...



The Hachiman Release of Captured Animals was also a ritual where they brought in bronze mirrors created at Komiya Hachiman Shrine in Kawara as divine objects.

Huh ...?

I'm sorry, Taki, but I want you to go back and join your sisters now.

Saido-sho?

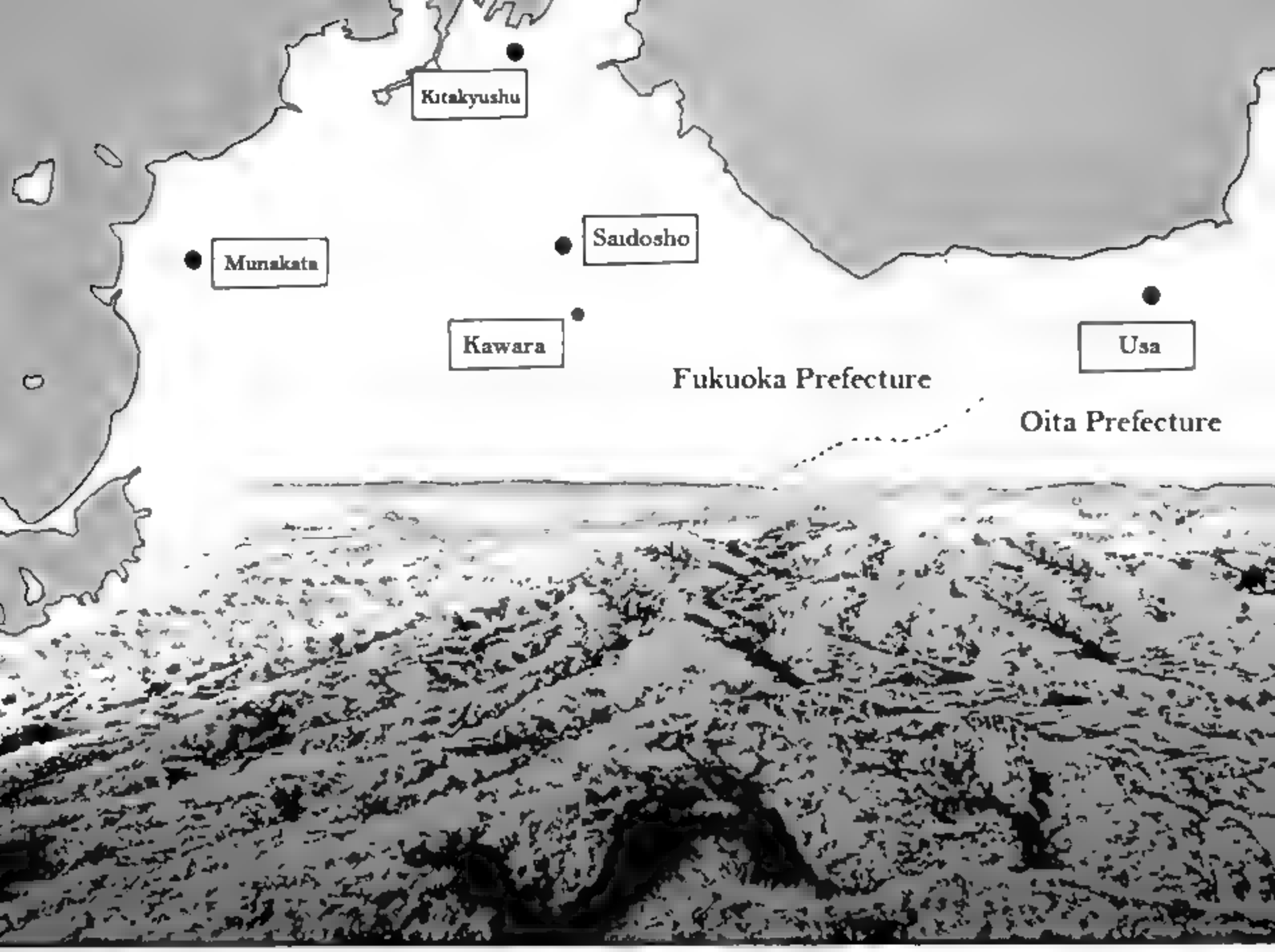
Kawara Hill is a famous bronze mine, and the area around Komiya Hachiman Shrine itself is known as "Saidosho", or "Bronze Mine". I'd like to stop by there.

19

I may have to walk around in the mountains. You can't follow me dressed like that.

I'll be back tonight.

Uncle!

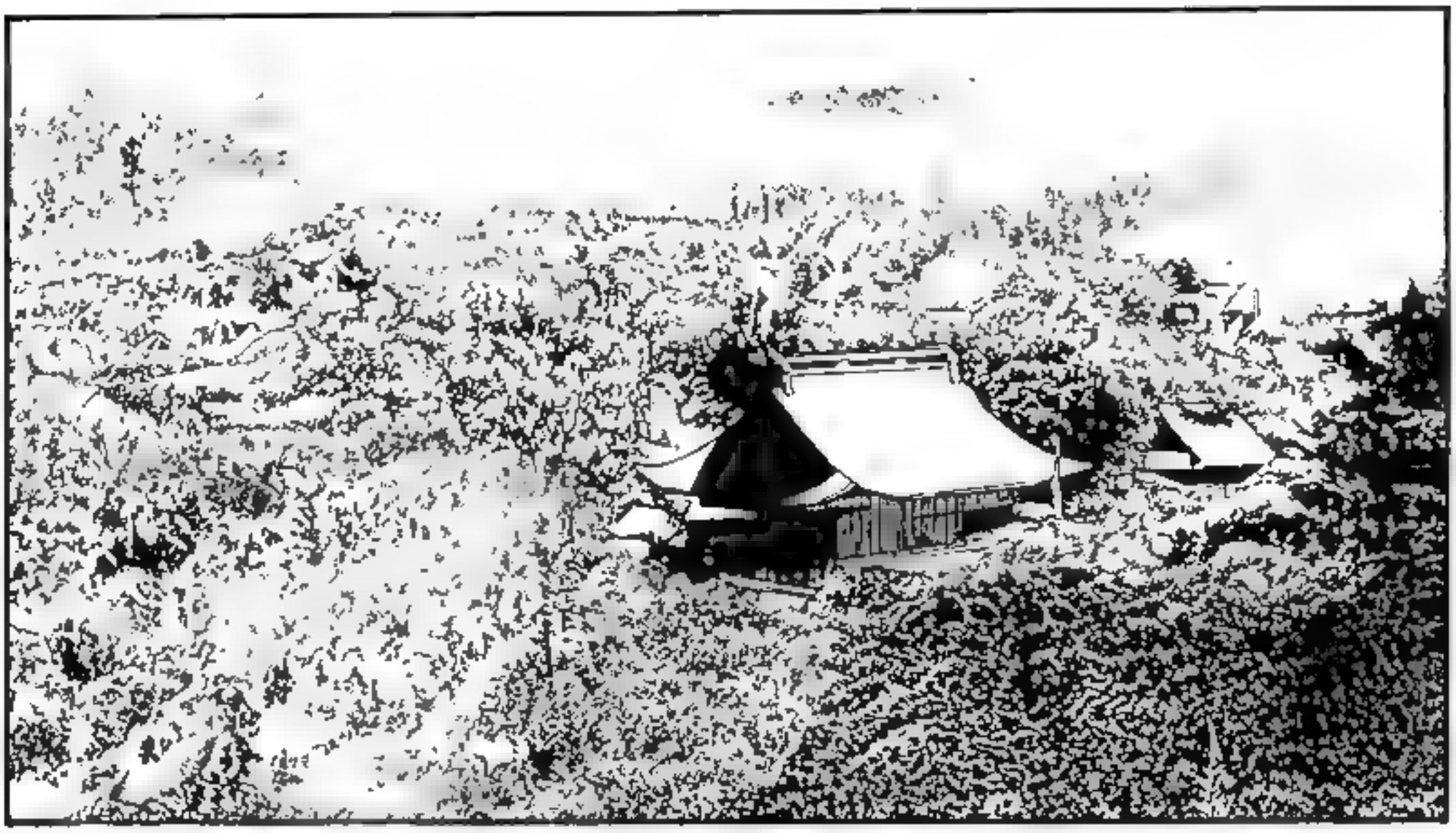

Kitakyushu
Munakata
Saidosho
Kawara
Usa
Fukuoka Prefecture
Oita Prefecture

さいどうしょ
採銅所
SAIDŌSHO
(KAWARA, TAGAWA DISTRICT, FUKUOKA PREFECTURE)
よぶの
YOBUNO
かわら
KAWARA

If the bronze mirrors made here were taken to Usa as divine objects, you could very well call this the birthplace of Hachiman.

Some say that the name Kawara comes from "kali", a Korean word used to refer to bronze, and this indicates that there were many metalworkers from Silla that settled there.

I may find a lead to the legendary underground shrine of "Kurogane Hachiman Shrine" around here.



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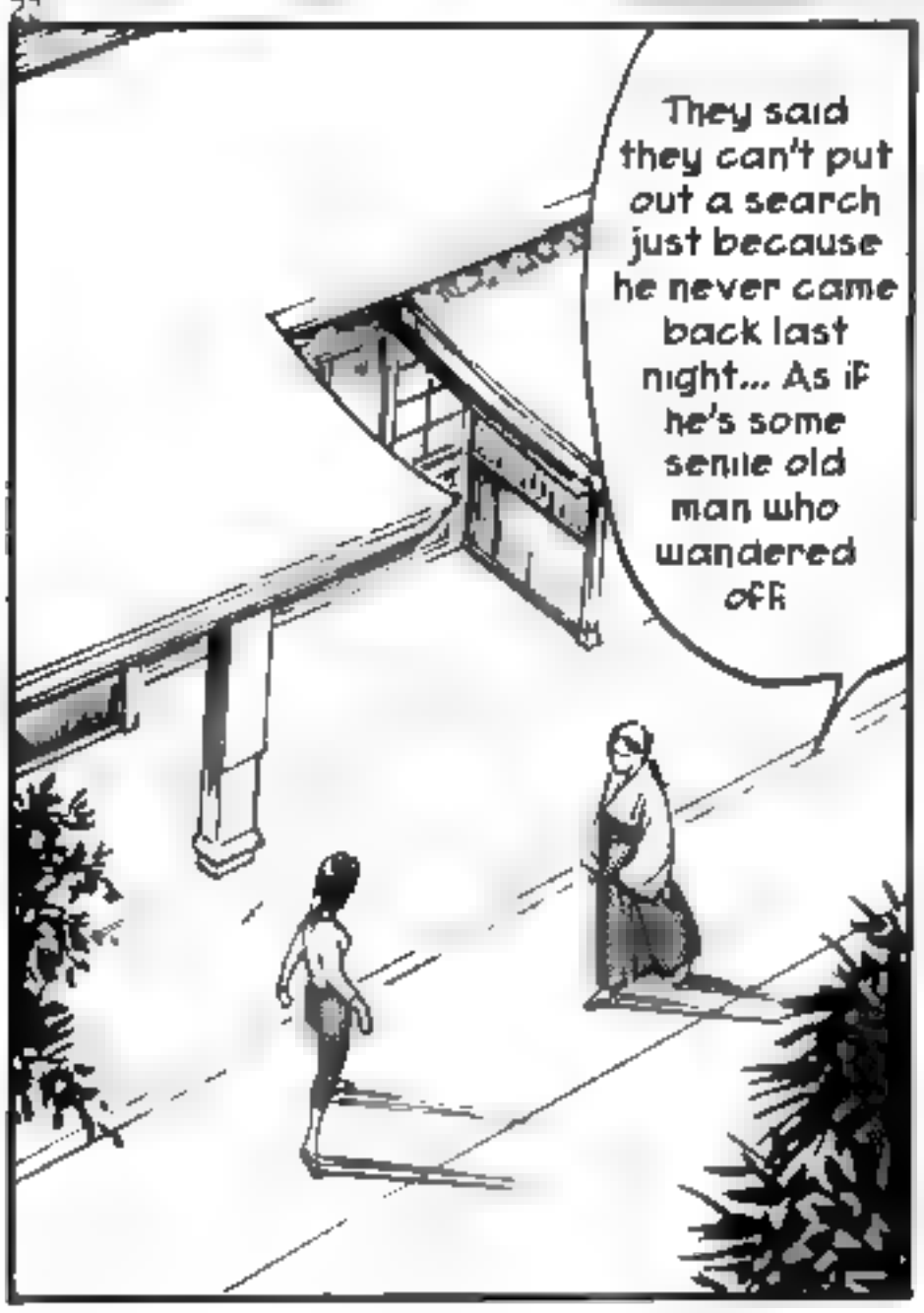

They said they can't put out a search just because he never came back last night... As if he's some senile old man who wandered off!

Yes... Thank you very much...

I've got a bad feeling about this...

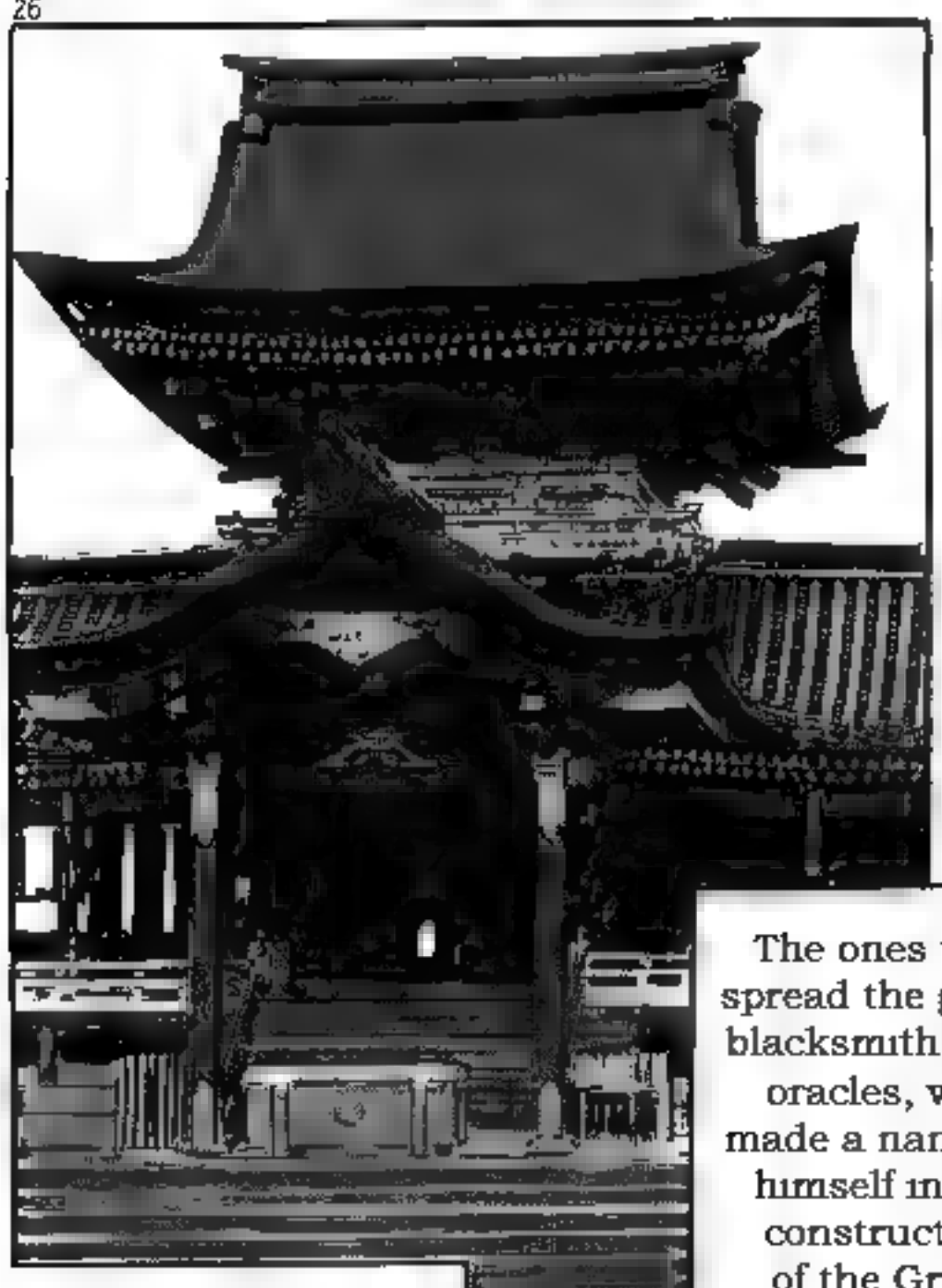
He said he'd be home last night. It's strange that he hasn't even called...

Well...

23

SIS, TAKI, LET'S GO! SOMETHING'S HAPPENED TO OUR UNCLE!

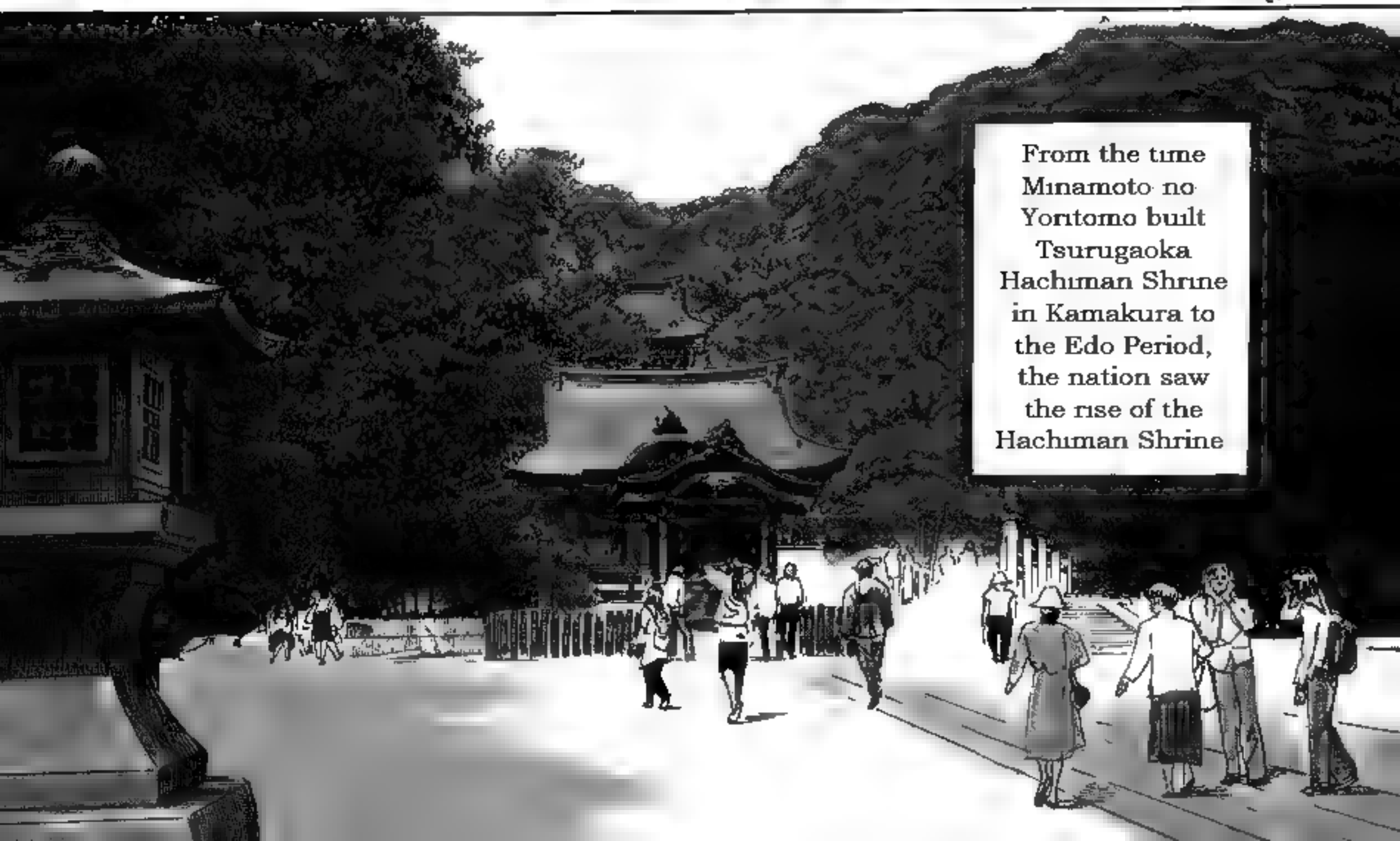
There are over 25,000 shrines nationwide that worship Hachiman, with Usa Hachiman Shrine as the original ..



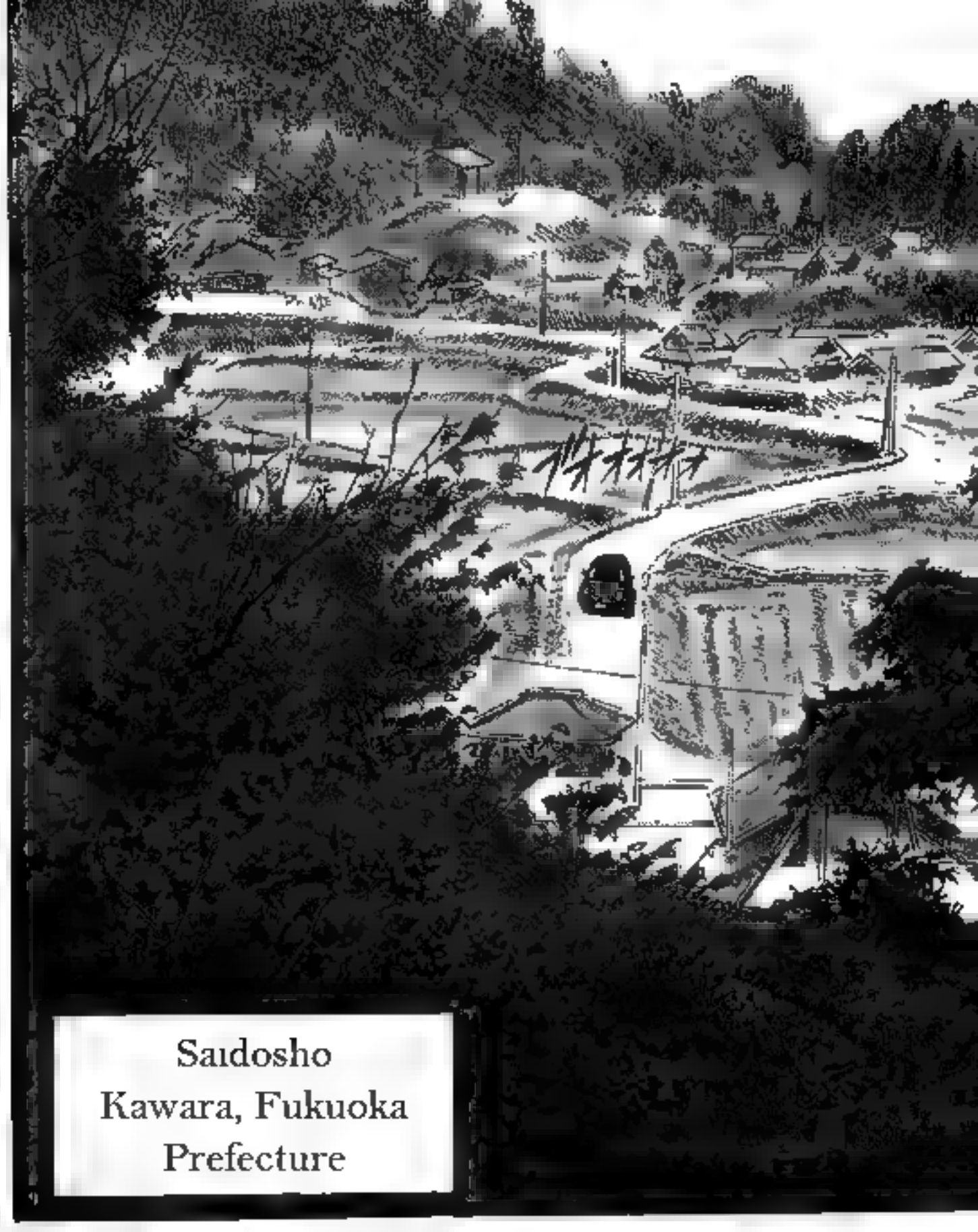
Iwashimizu Hachiman Shrine

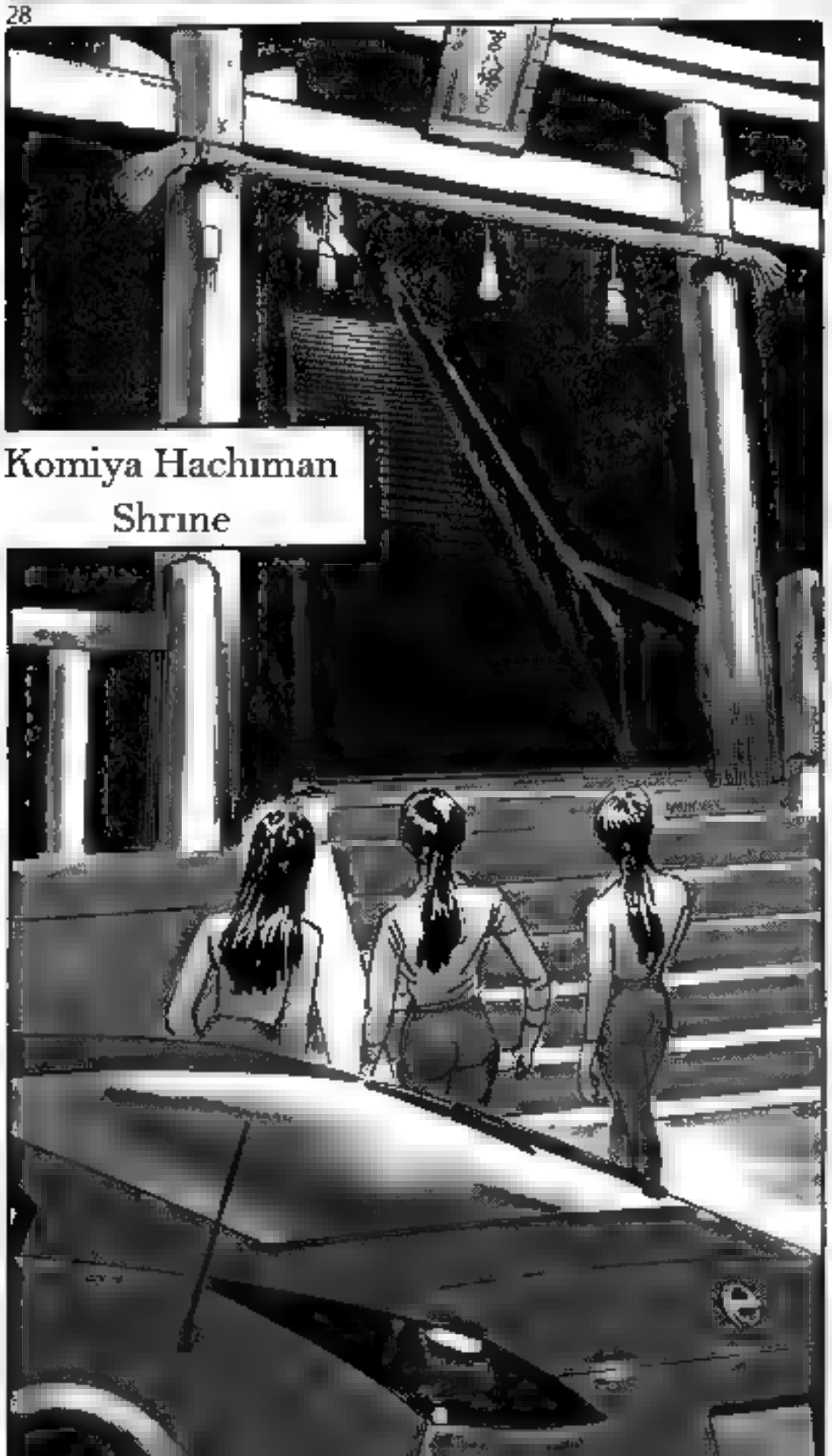
The ones that spread the god of blacksmiths and oracles, who made a name for himself in the construction of the Great Buddha, to this extent, were what would become the warrior class

Revered as a god of war and military, and also known as "Hachiman of the Bow and Arrow", Ha chiman spread along with the expansion of military forces .



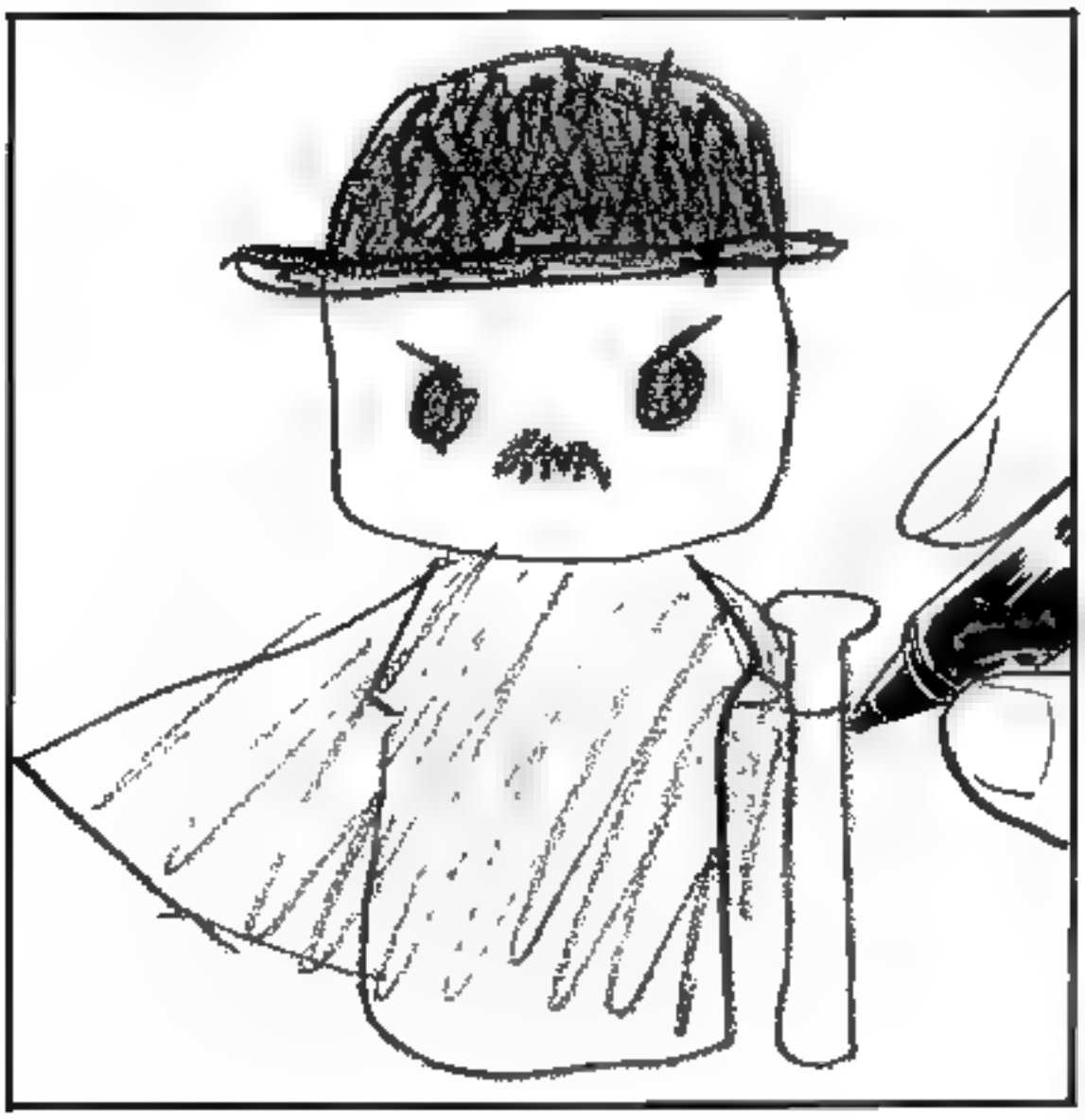
From the time Minamoto no Yoritomo built Tsurugaoka Hachiman Shrine in Kamakura to the Edo Period, the nation saw the rise of the Hachiman Shrine


Saidosho
Kawara, Fukuoka
Prefecture


Komiya Hachiman
Shrine

So this is where they made the bronze mirrors to be taken to Usa as Hachiman's divine objects...

Uncle was looking for the mysterious "Kurogane Hachiman Shrine". Why would he come here...?



Oh, so my description's not good enough? Well, have you seen anyone that looks like this?

I'm impressed she could tell who it was by that drawing.

She said that she saw him heading up to the remains of an old bronze mine called "Fukamabu".

If Kurogane Hachiman Shrine is an underground shrine, there must be an underground passageway that leads to it.

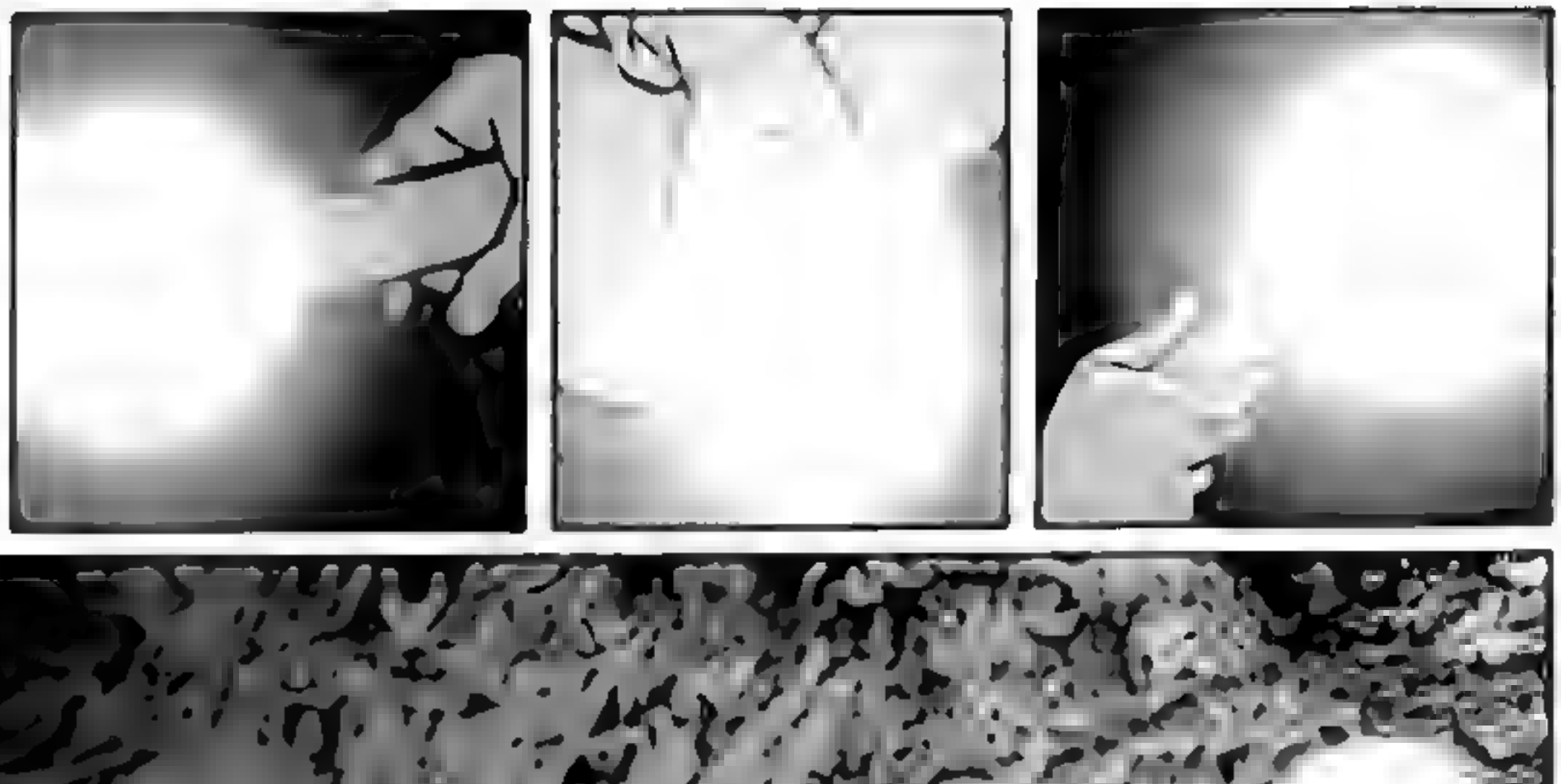
A cave in a land related to Hachiman... That must be what Uncle was looking for...
Okay, if we find a cave, let's go down it!

Cane tracks!

There's no tracks coming back...!

No!
I'm Uncle's assistant!

Taki, you should stay here. It's best if someone stays behind.



IF YOU'VE THERE, ANSWER UP!

UNCLE !?

Was this all dug by people?

There are signs that they excavated bronze from here ...

They must have used a lot of this bronze during the building of the Great Buddha of Nara, after Usa Hachiman's oracle.

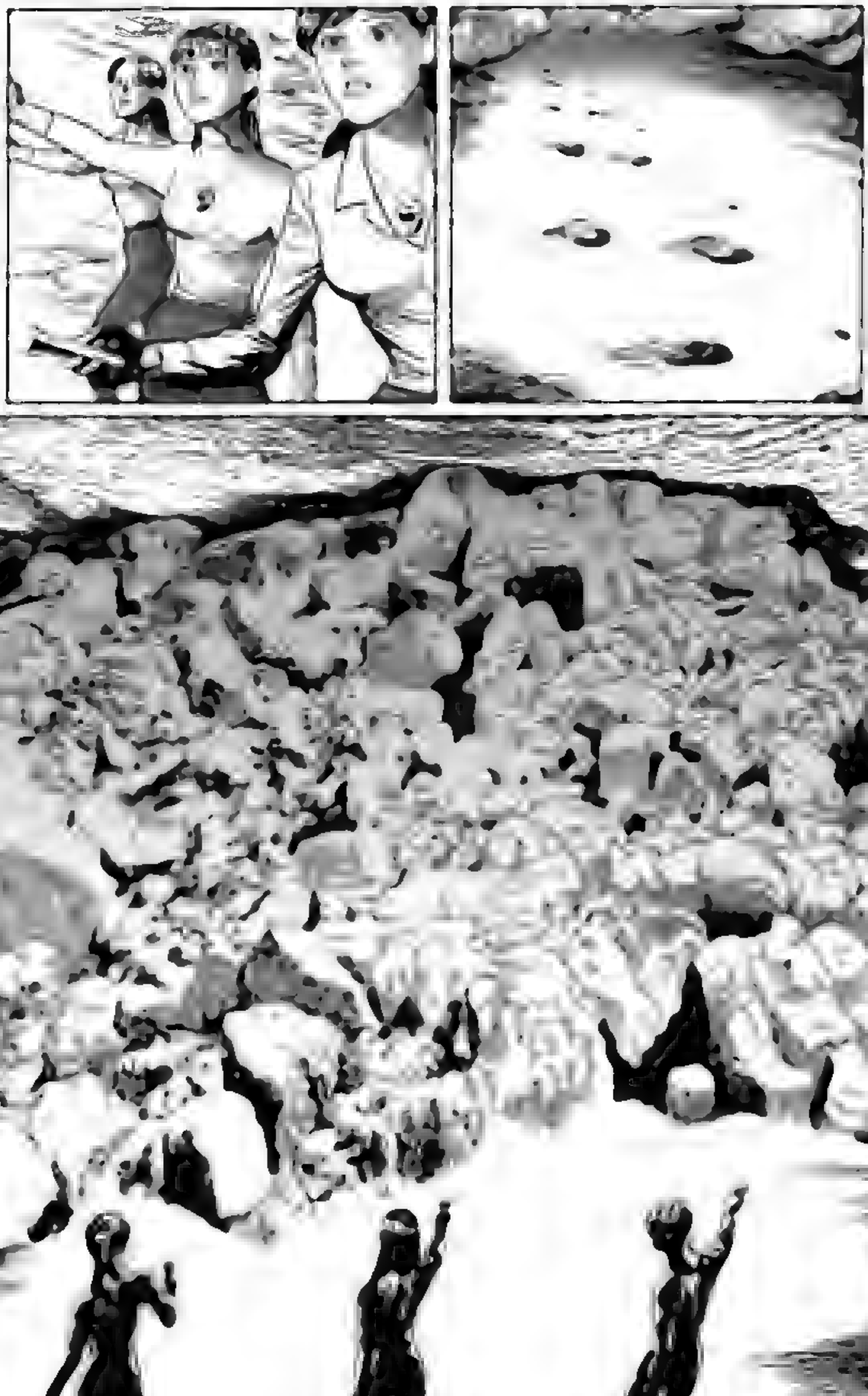
Bronze mirrors ...

That looks like the remains of an altar or something... It feels like they carved it right out of the rock.

They must've enshrined one of Hachiman's bronze mirrors that they carried to Usa For the Release of Captured Animals ritual.

The tracks keep going...

We've been walking For a long time now. Don't tell me this cave leads all the way to Usa...



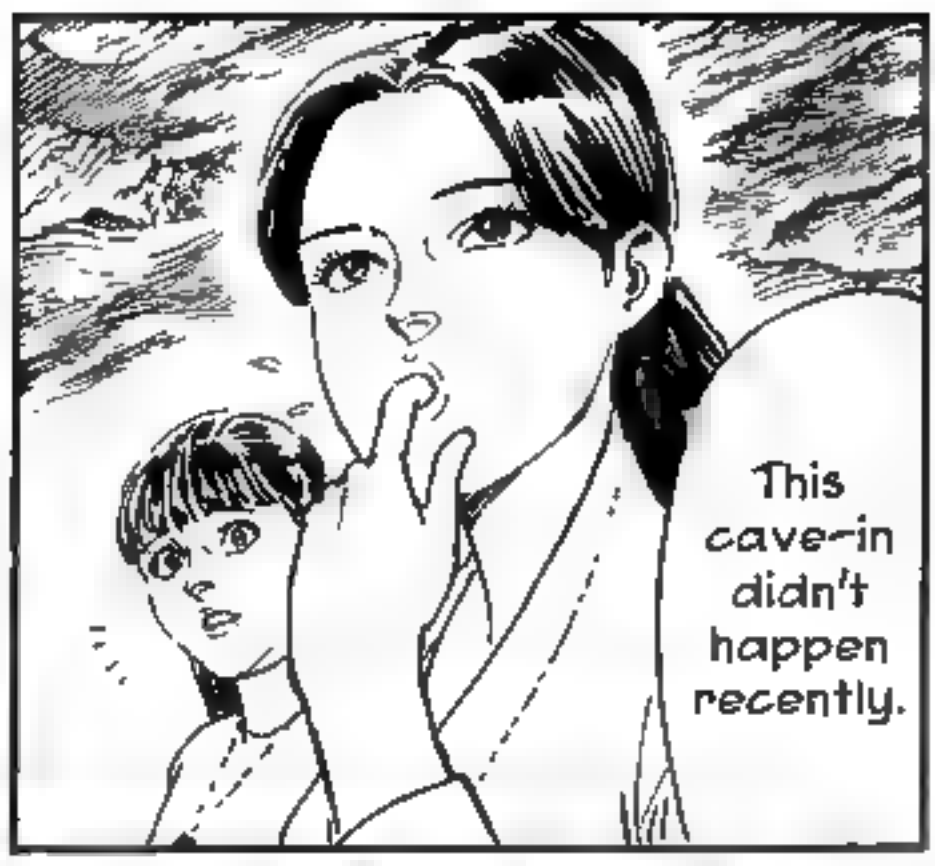
UNCLE? UNCLE!?

U...

HE WAS CRUSHED BY ROCKS THAT FELL FROM THE SHAFT... WHAT DO WE DO, SIS!?

.....

38


This cave-in didn't happen recently.

There's a wind...

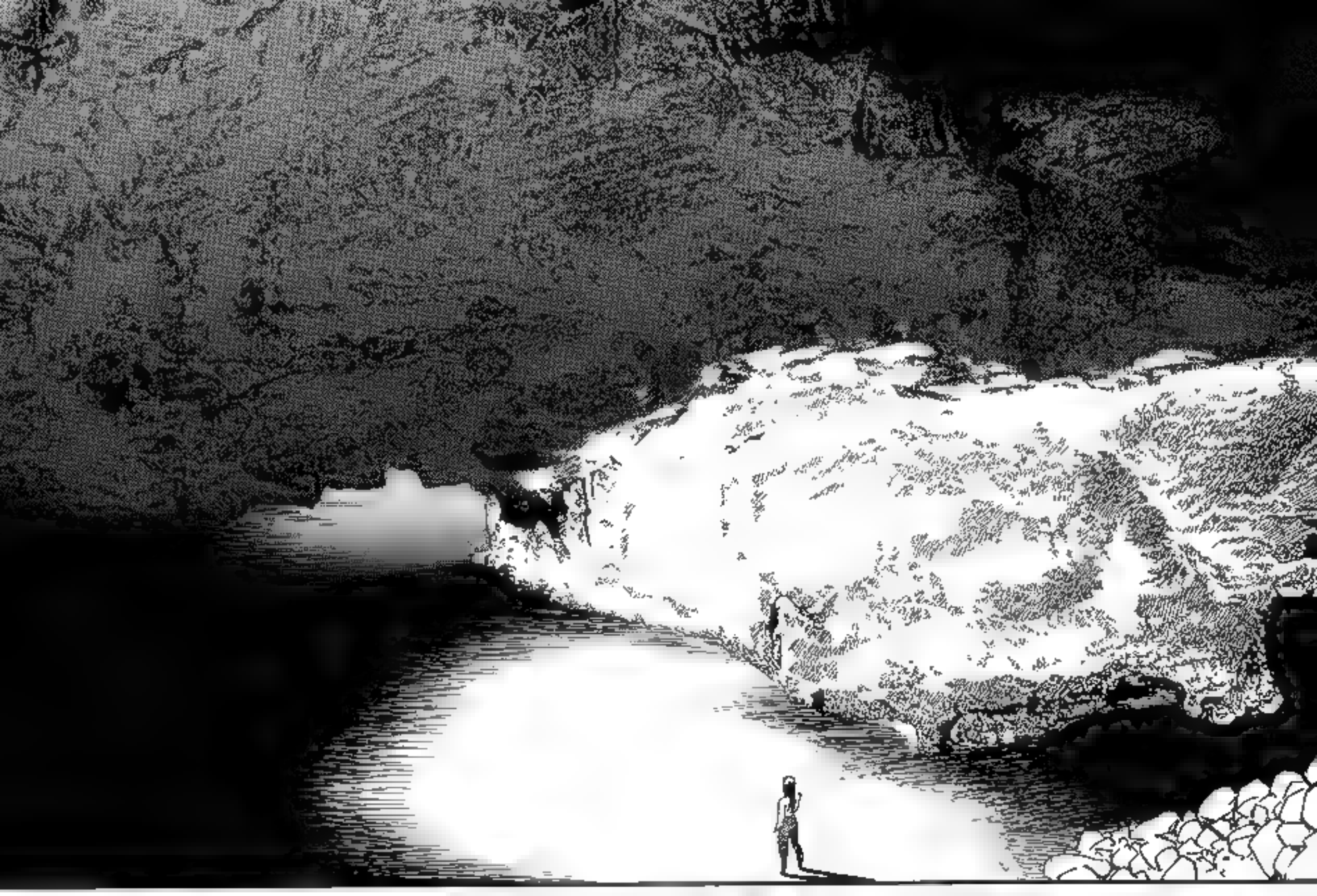
Are you alright, Taki?
If Uncle made it through here, there's no reason I can't!

EEEEEK!

...Ouch ...

I...I'm okay! The floor here's a little low, though...

TAKI! WHAT'S WRONG !?



This feels a lot different from the cave we were just in...

KCH
...

ITSUKI!
TAGIRI!
T...
TAKI!

After I managed to get through the crack between the fallen rocks, I slipped and fell, and twisted my ankle.

W...Why did you three come alone!? You should've waited for the search party!

I somehow made it this far but the cold made my old wound in my other leg start to ache, so I couldn't move anymore.

We just couldn't stay put! Is your leg hurt, Uncle...!?

No, Uncle! You're going the wrong way!

I guess I'm getting old now... Give me a hand, will you?

I've come this far. I want to go a little further and confirm whether or not there is an underground shrine here...!

SIGN IMPERIAL SECURITY

46

YES, SIR!!

...Huh?

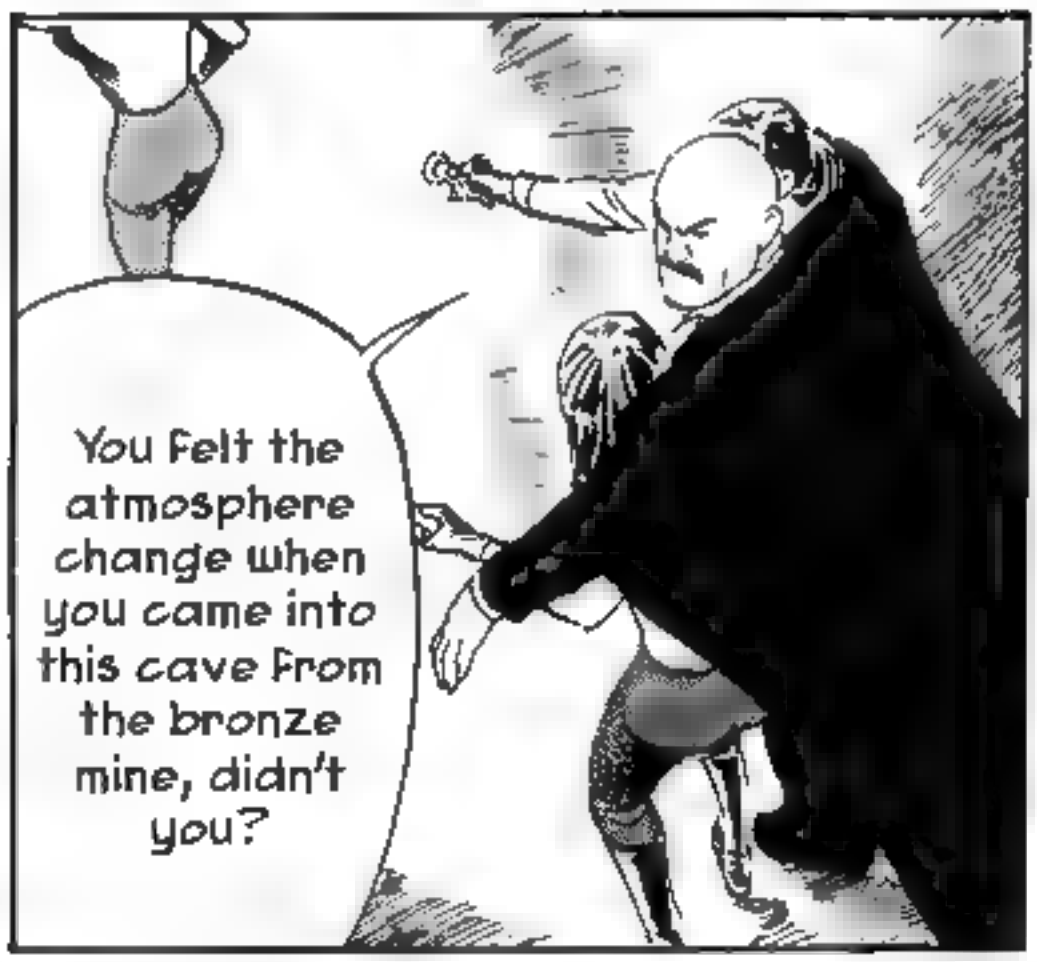
Seal this exit off... And do it thoroughly!

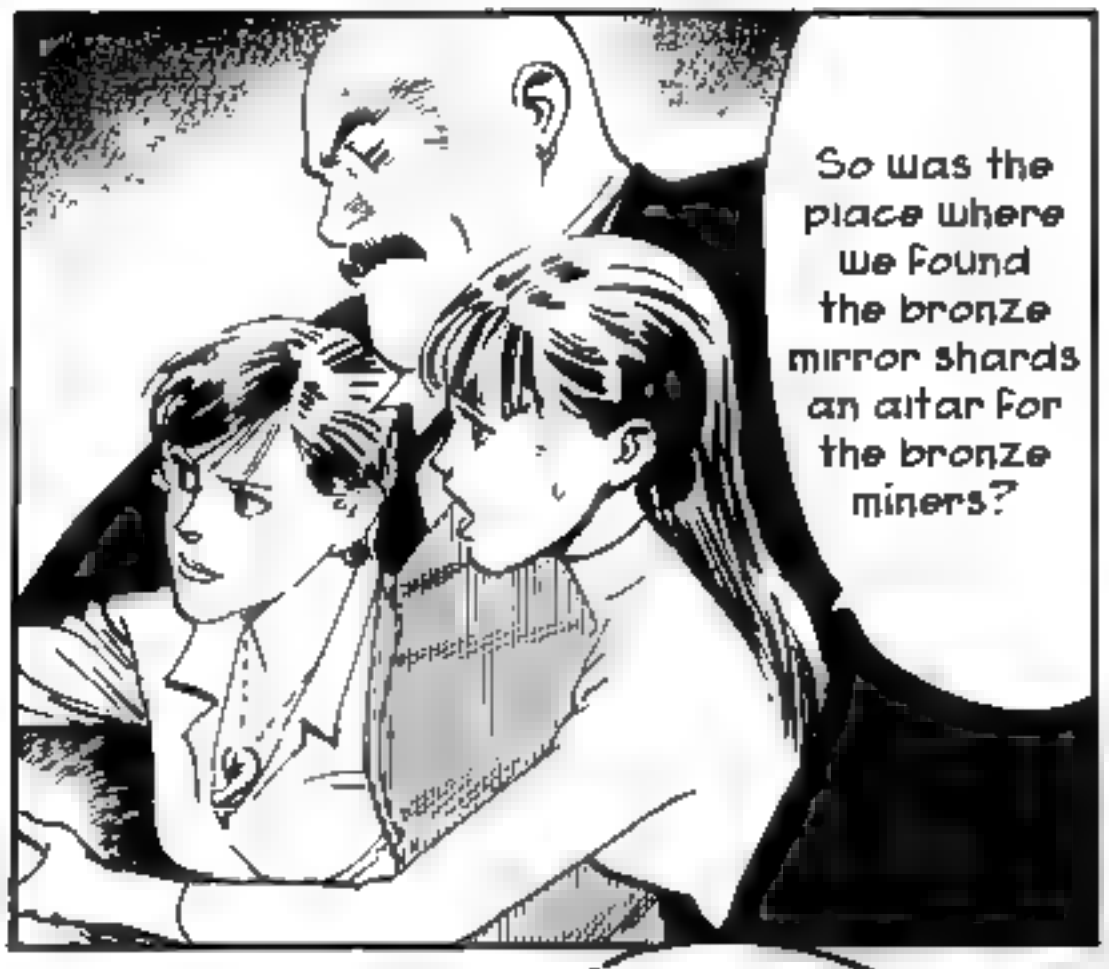
48

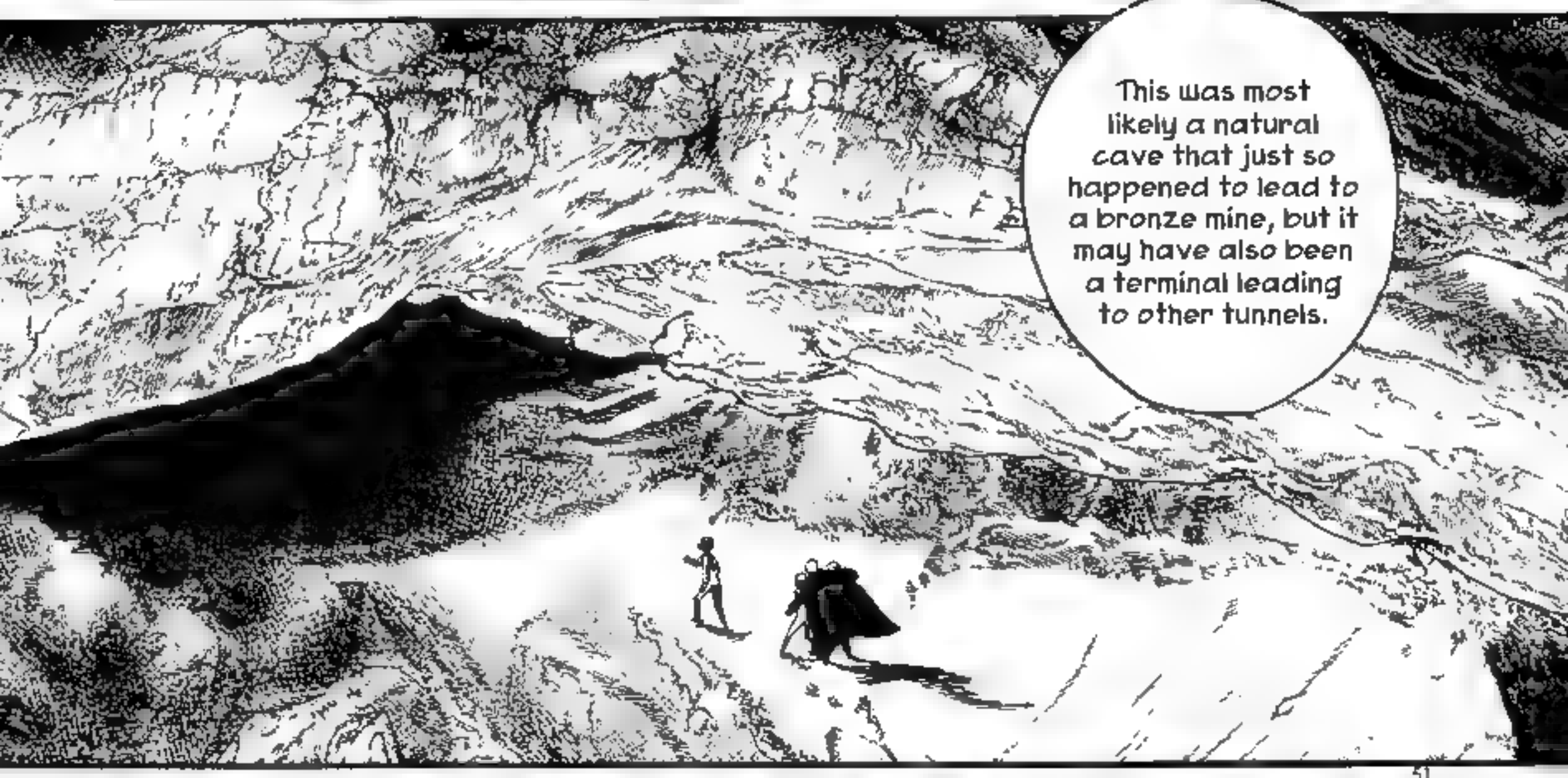
The first thing I thought of when I heard of an "underground shrine" was the underground church in the Wieliczka Salt Mine, Poland.

It was a chapel of salt, carved by the devout miners in their spare time...

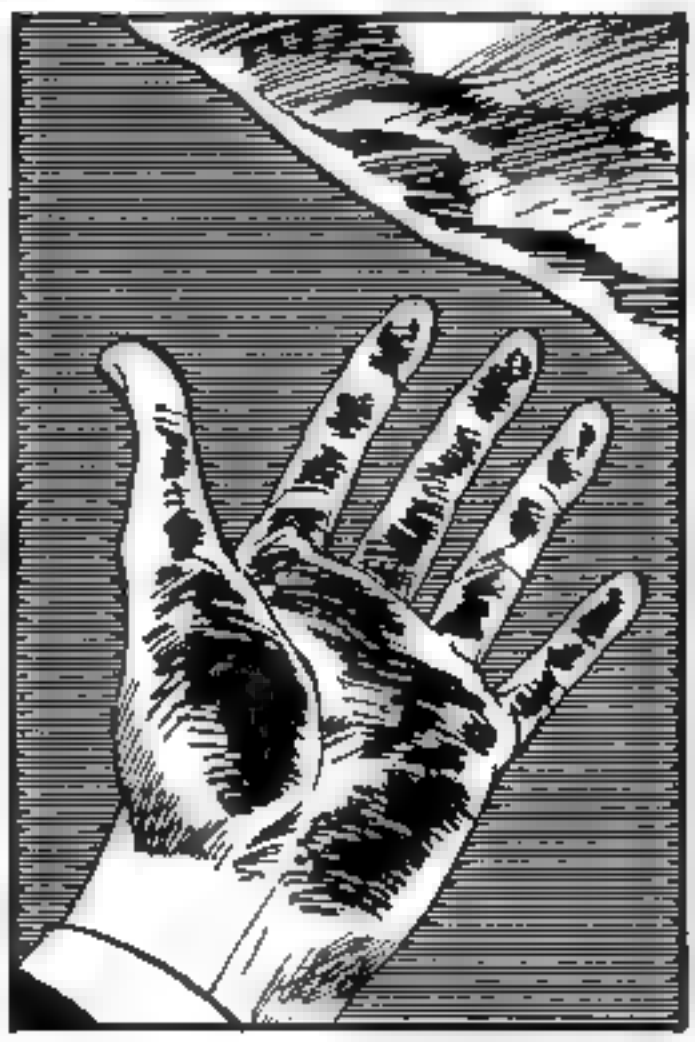
I suspected the possibility that an underground shrine may have been built by miners that work underground.


You felt the atmosphere change when you came into this cave from the bronze mine, didn't you?


So was the place where we found the bronze mirror shards an altar for the bronze miners?


This was most likely a natural cave that just so happened to lead to a bronze mine, but it may have also been a terminal leading to other tunnels.

It's coal dust.



Look at this.

This part of east Fukuoka was where they opened the Chikuho Coal Field in the Meiji Period.

Coal?

One of the reasons was the commencement of modern ironworks in Japan. The blast furnaces needed large quantities of coal!

And why was there a higher demand for coal as fuel?

52

U... Uncle...!

AND WITH IT, HACHI-MAN'S...

THIS CAVE LASTED THROUGH THE CHANGE OF THE TIMES, FROM BRONZE TO IRON!

It must be because I spent all night in absolute darkness, unable to move anything but my head...

I wonder what it is I'm so worked up about...

Just calm down... You wouldn't want to fail.

Fine...

.....

And that explosion from the entrance really worries me...

Shouldn't we turn back, Uncle? What if there's a dead end...?

It probably blocked of the entrance...

B...But who...?

I think someone's trying to close this cave off...

That cave-in we found on the way must've been from a blast, too.

We may have to walk all night, but we'll run into something sealed away sooner or later!

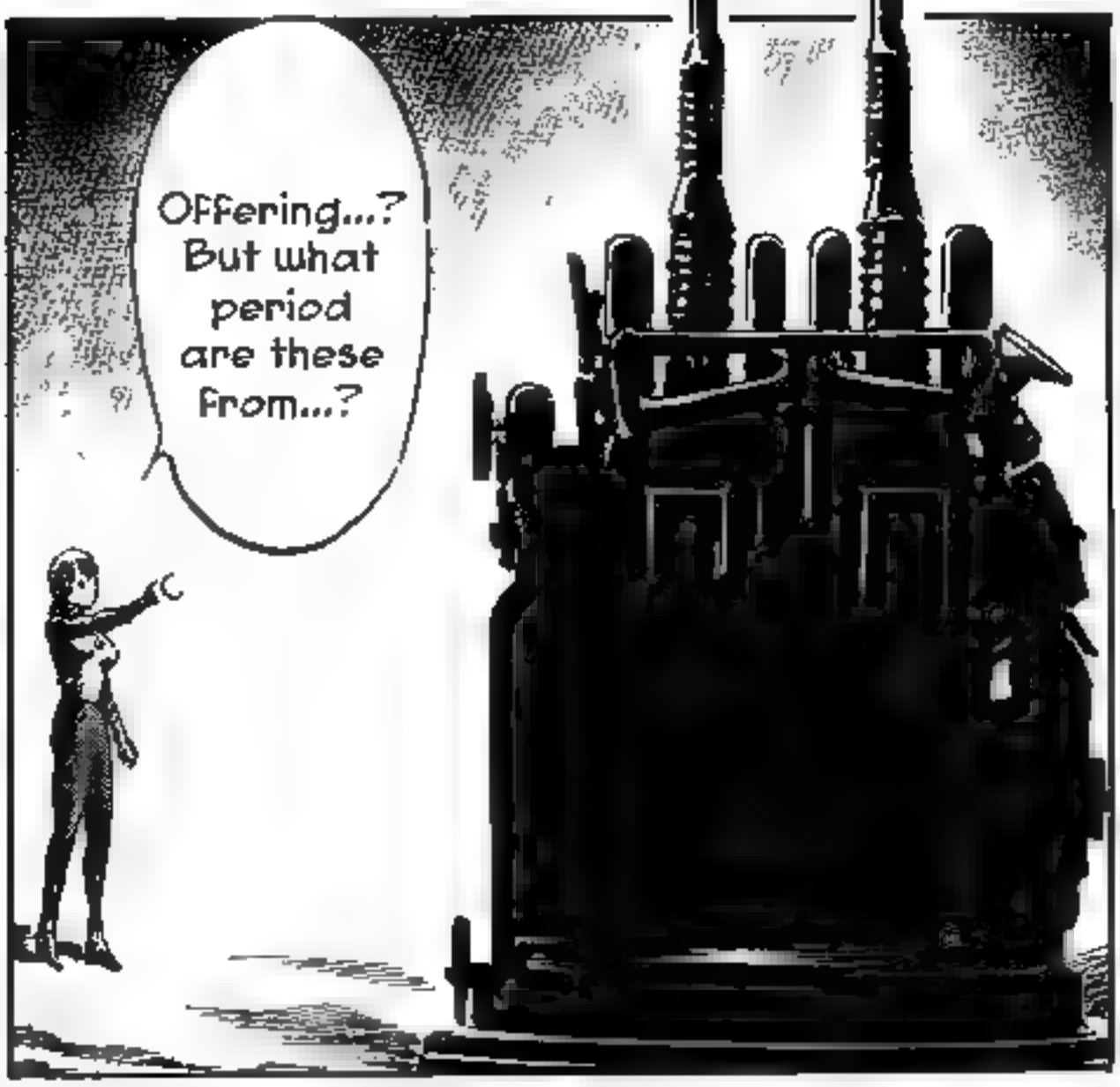
The cave's going north...

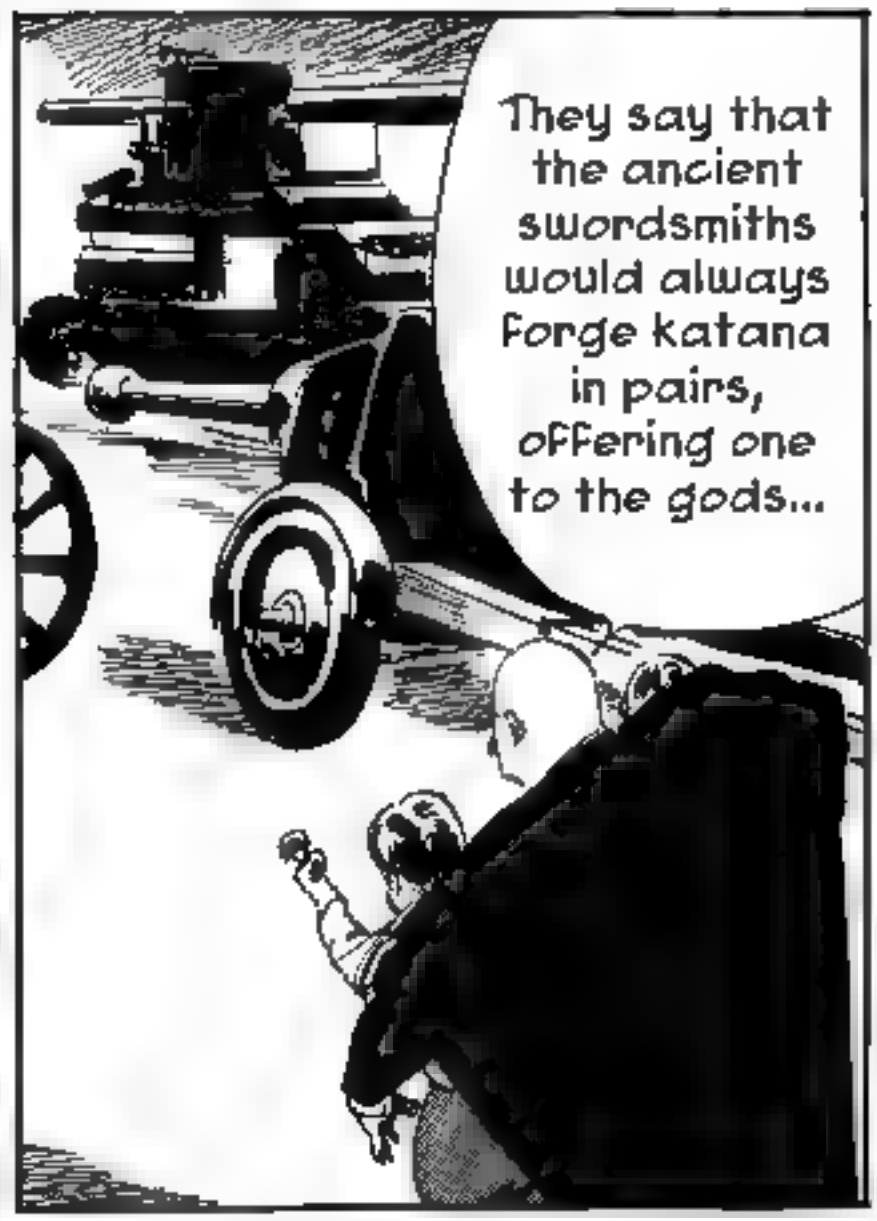
Ahh
...

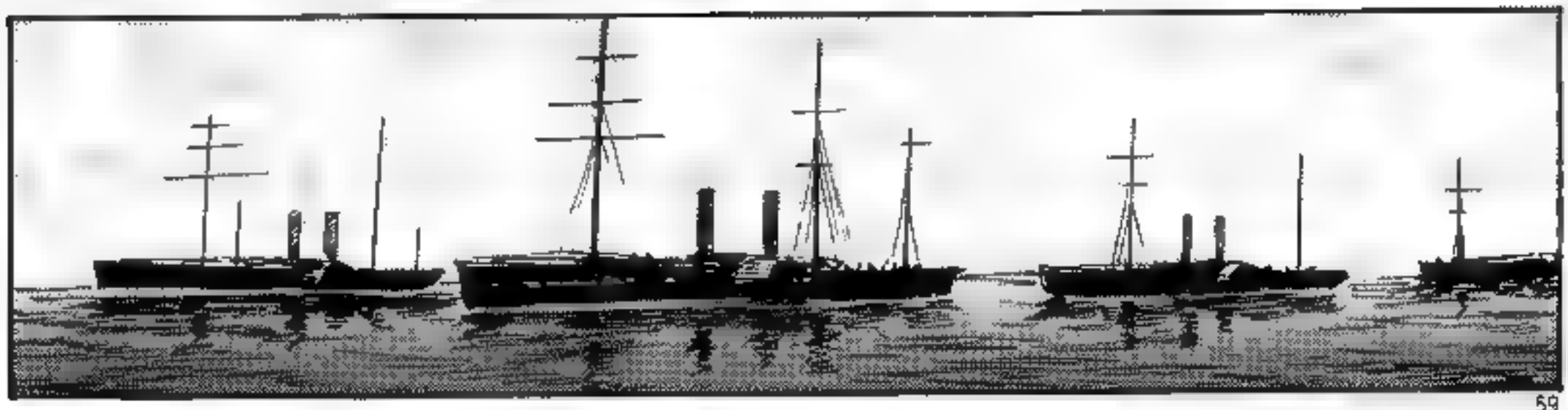
I'm
hungry
...

I...Is this a shrine...? It's made of iron... This must be Kurogane Hachiman Shrine!

I think it was originally a small shrine built by the miners, but not anymore...

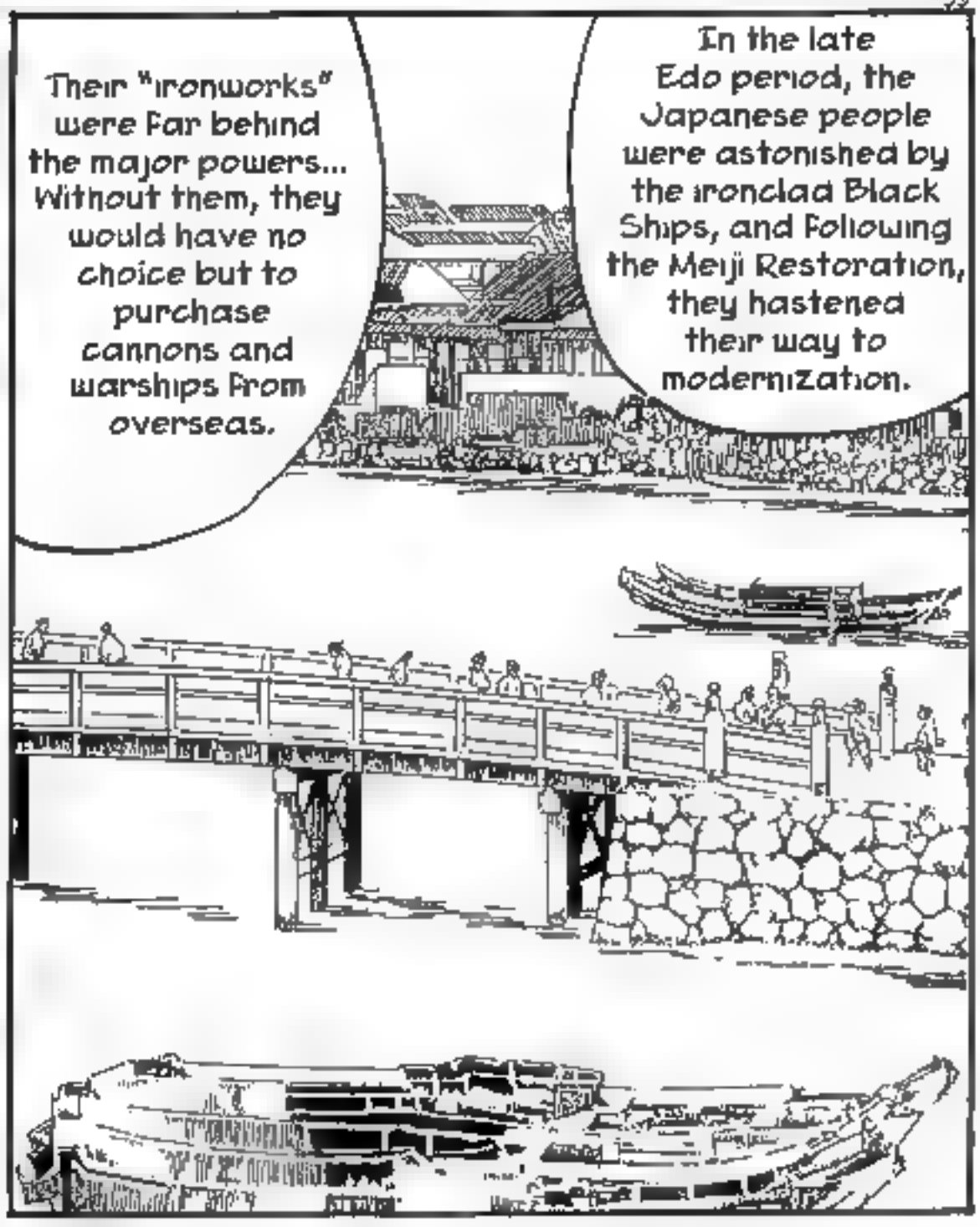

Offering...? But what period are these from...?


They say that the ancient swordsmiths would always forge katana in pairs, offering one to the gods...



59

The future of the Great Japanese Empire depended on whether or not they had ironworks for their own armaments!


Their "ironworks" were far behind the major powers... Without them, they would have no choice but to purchase cannons and warships from overseas.
In the late Edo period, the Japanese people were astonished by the ironclad Black Ships, and following the Meiji Restoration, they hastened their way to modernization.

60

Perhaps because each of these villages had a Hachiman Shrine, this new village was named...

Wakamatsu Village

Tobata Village

In 1889... the 23rd year of Meiji's reign, three villages in northern Kyushu overlooking Dokai Bay, Ogura, Edamitsu, and Okura, merged to form a larger village.

Dokai Bay

Edamitsu

Ogura

Okura

Yahata.

They acquired the vast tracts of land secured by the merger.

Two years later, the current prime minister brought forth a proposal for establishing state-run steelworks, and chose Yahata after years of screening...

So the first modern ironworks in Japan were established in Northern Kyushu, the birthplace of Hachiman and the first place to accept iron-age civilization in ancient times!

They brought in iron ore imported from China from the harbor; smelted it with coal from Chikuho, and provided enough steel for the entire nation.

The Yahata Steelworks, the largest in all the Orient, began operating in 1901...

God of black-smiths...

God of iron...

63

Guardian deity of Bud-dhism...

Guardian of the state...

God of war and military...

Too fitting, in fact...!

The many-faced Hachiman was the most fitting deity to name this ironworks after!

.....!
WHO ARE YOU!? WHY ARE YOU TRES-PASSING IN HERE!?

帝国警護隊

WHAT'S GOING ON!?

SIGN IMPERIAL SECURITY

帝国警護隊

Munakata Tadakusu... Itsuki, Tagiri, Taki...

Y... Yes.

Oh, so you're the, uh... priestesses of Amateru Hoakari Shrine, branch of Munakata Grand Shrine...

It does look like these girls did call the police for a search party...

Right this way, sir... I'll take you outside.

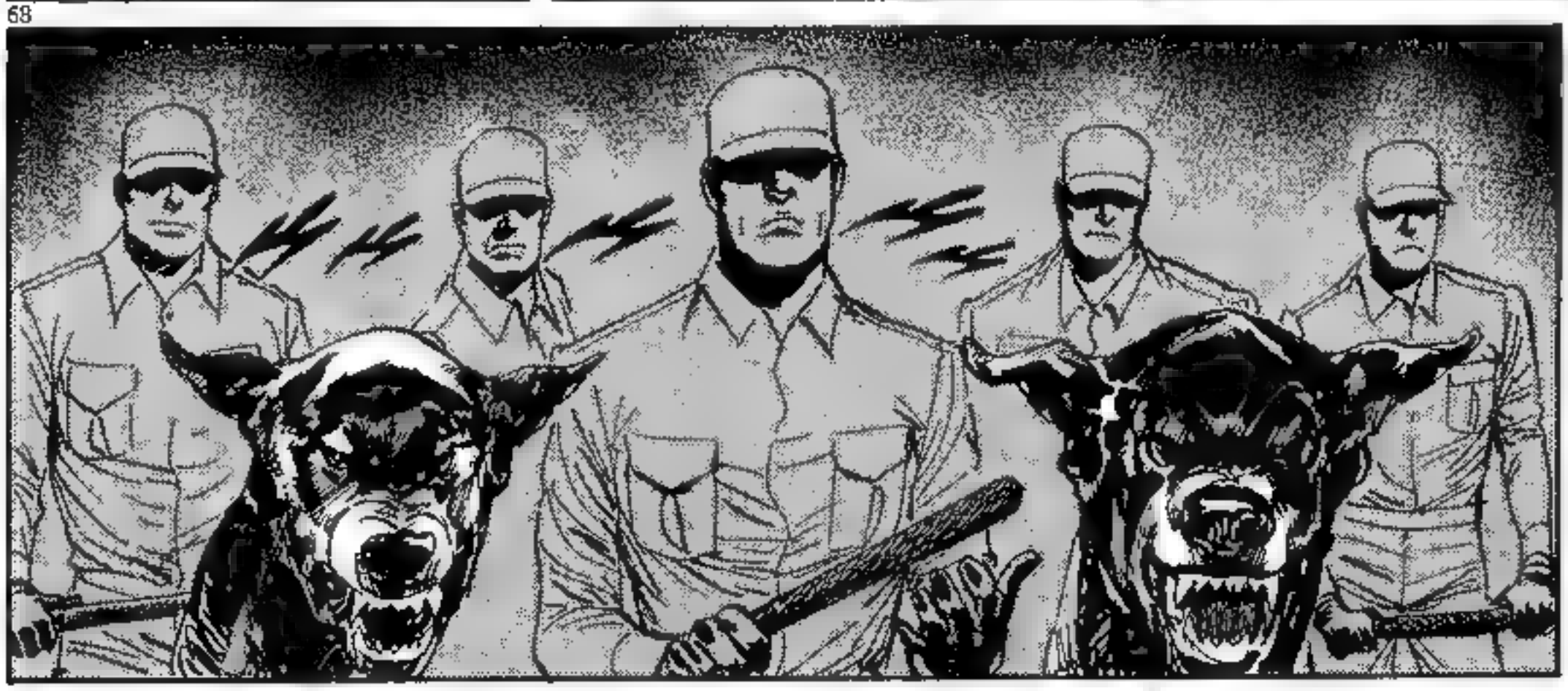
.....

And the Munakata Clan does have a connection to Hachiman...

Uncle...

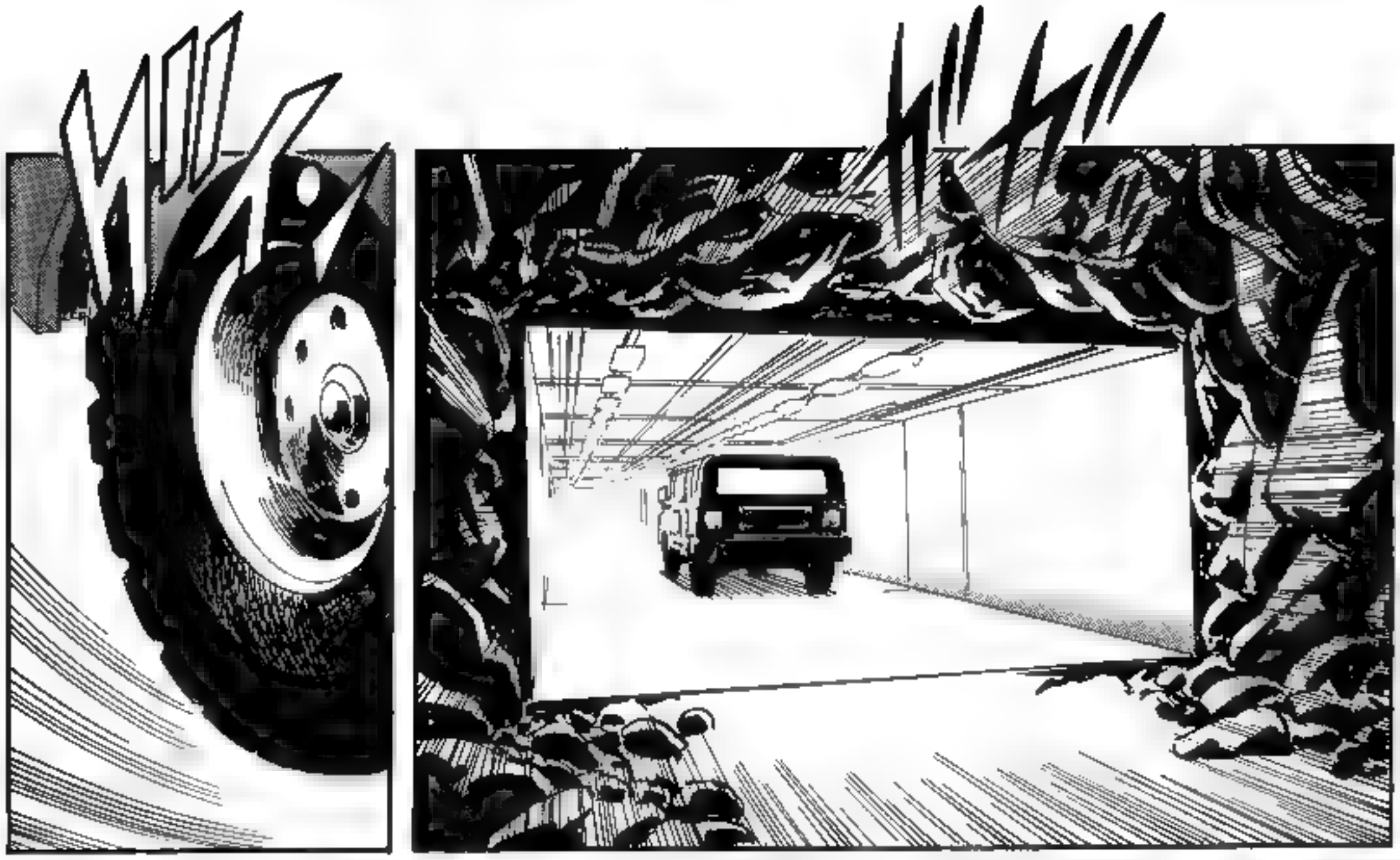
WAIT JUST A SECOND!

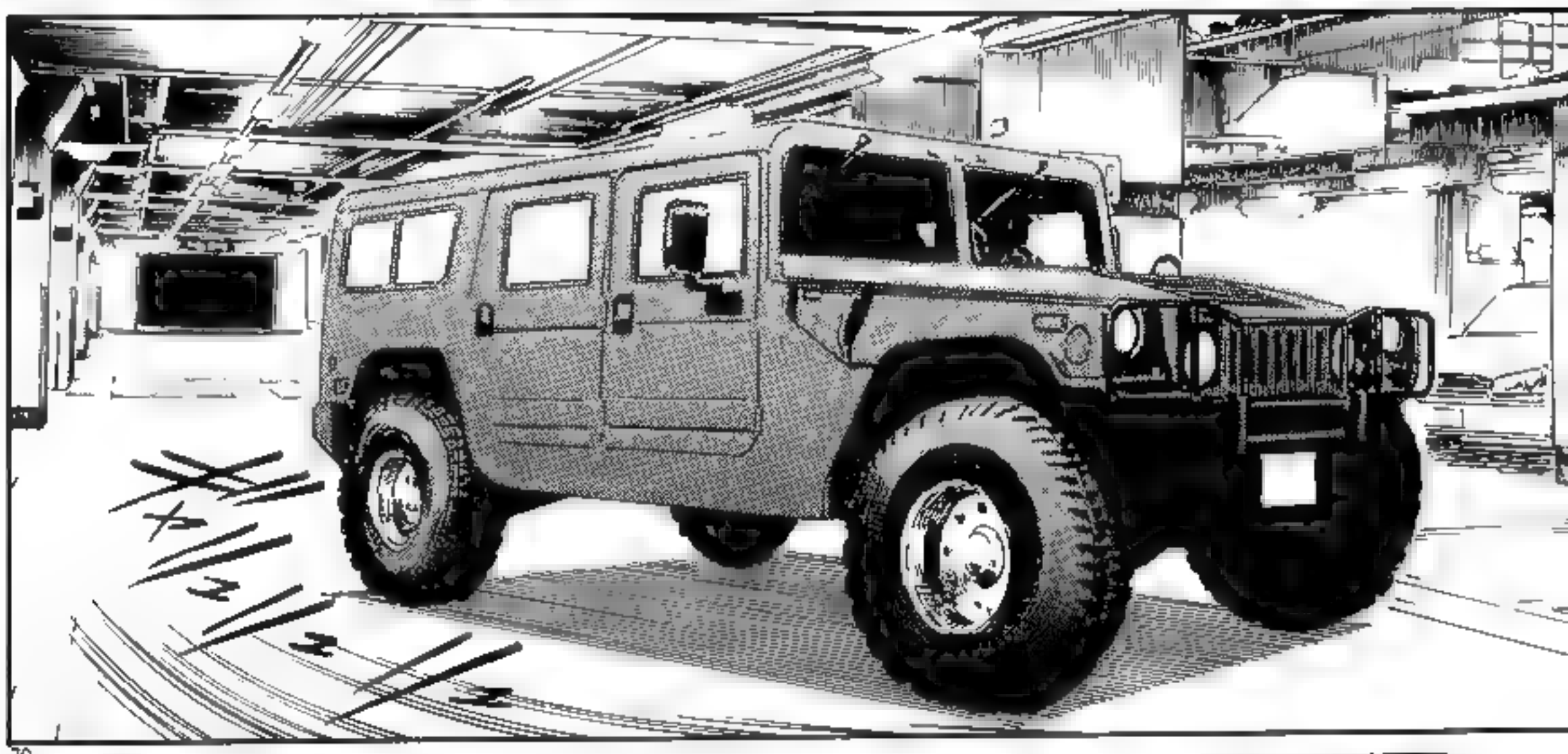
WHY ARE YOU KEEPING KUROGANE HACHIMAN SHRINE A SECRET!? WHO IN THE WORLD...!?

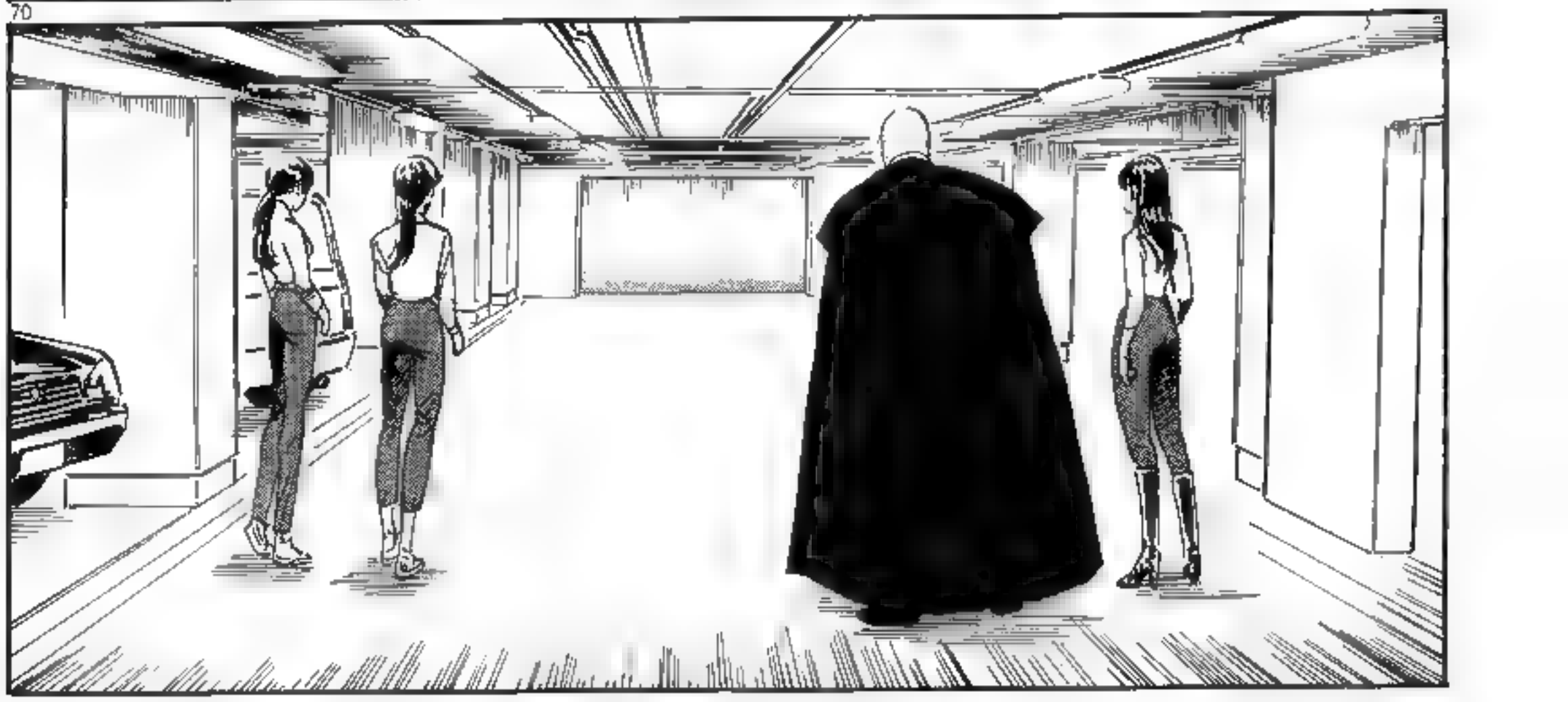


I suggest you don't tell anyone about what you saw down there, Professor Munakata.
Also... Don't count on coming back ever again.
So it's a shrine that only special parishioners can visit...

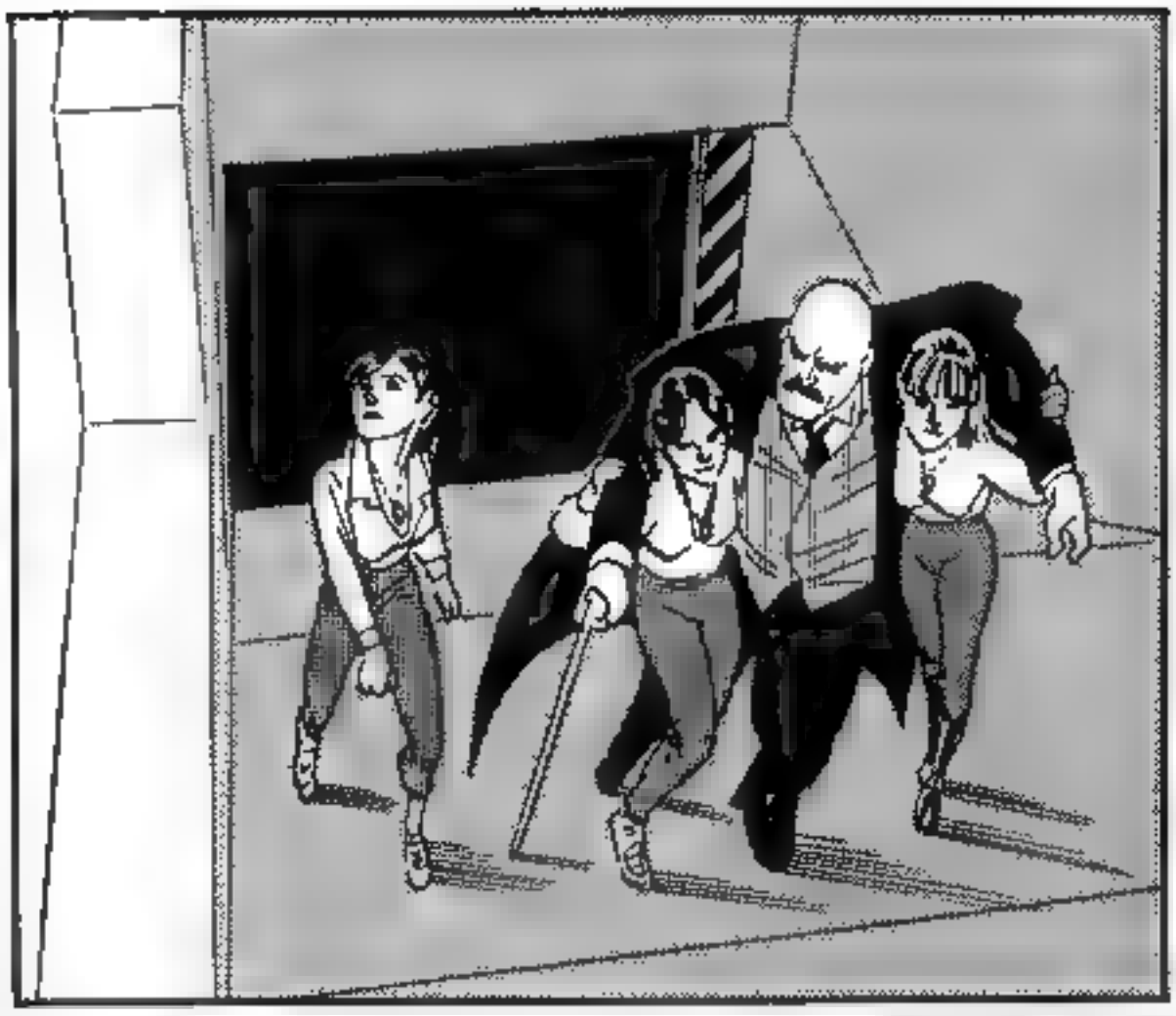
Ex-actly.
It's visited annually by politicians and financial big-wigs...







I knew it... We've walked almost twenty kilometers north from Saidosho...

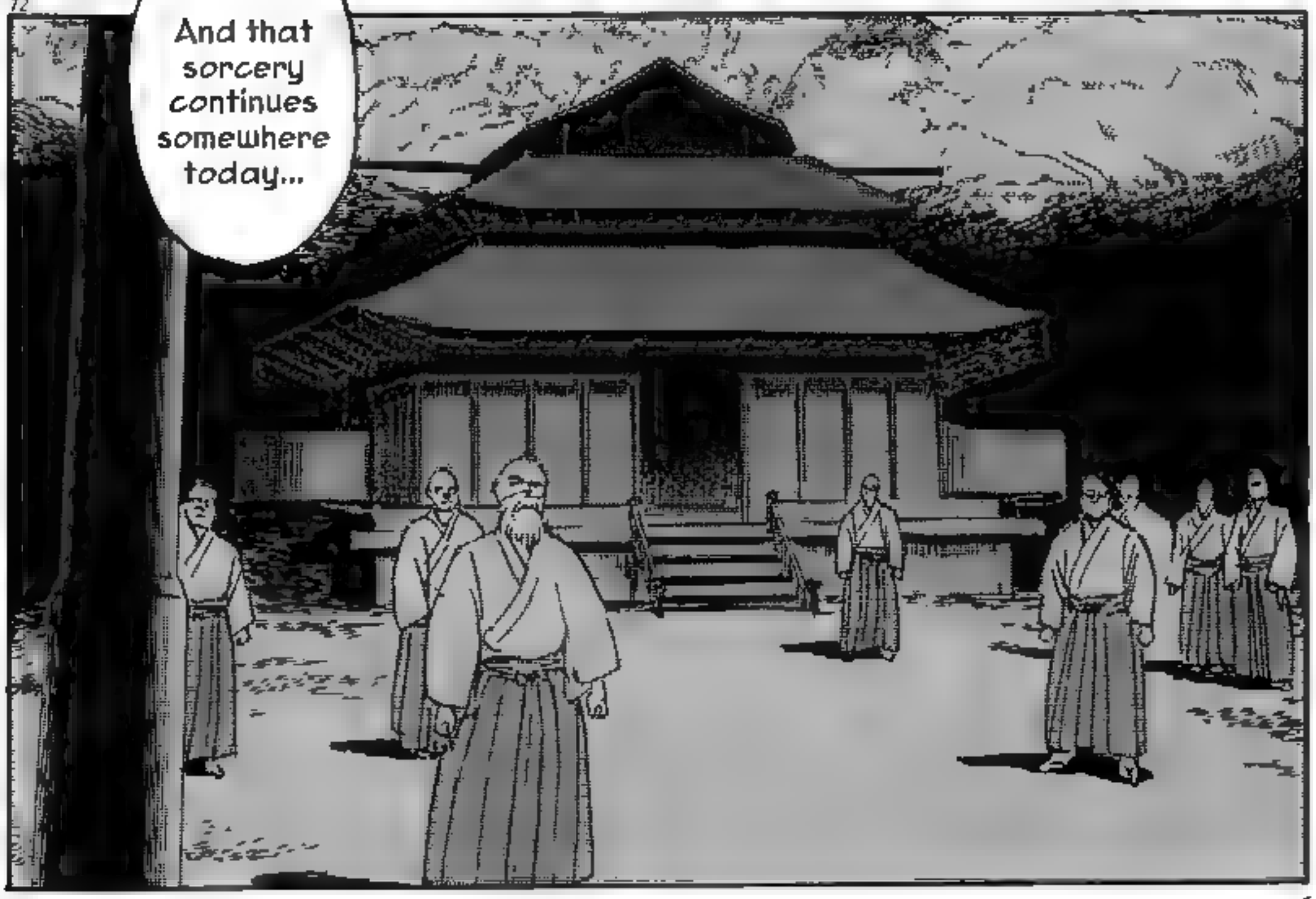


P
Kitakyushu City,
Yahata-Higashi Ward Parking Lot

We're in Yahata in Kitaky-ushu City...
The region where Yahata Steelworks used to be...!

1901

Yahata Steel-works...
It may well have been a massive Hachiman shrine, erected by the Meiji Government, filled with the prayers and sorcery of modern Japan.


And that sorcery continues somewhere today...

THE OAKE RECORDS OF PROFESSOR MIYAMA

CHAPTER 12

PRESENTED BY

HOKUTO NO GUN

TRANSLATED BY

SYSTEMATICCHAOS

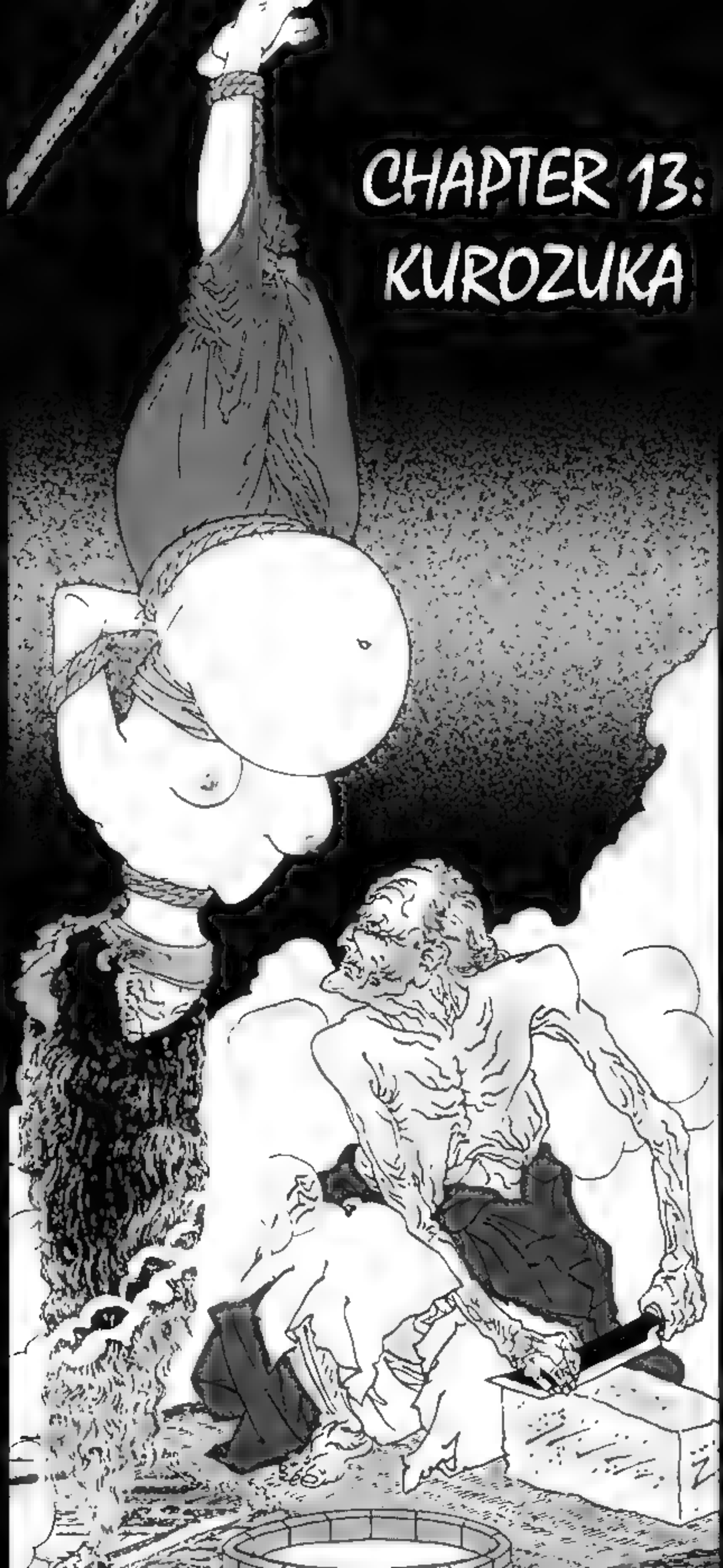
EDITING BY

HIGHTIDE AND KAZUHIKO

PROOFREADING BY

DESTORYERRING

CHAPTER 13: KUROZUKA



KURO-
ZUKA

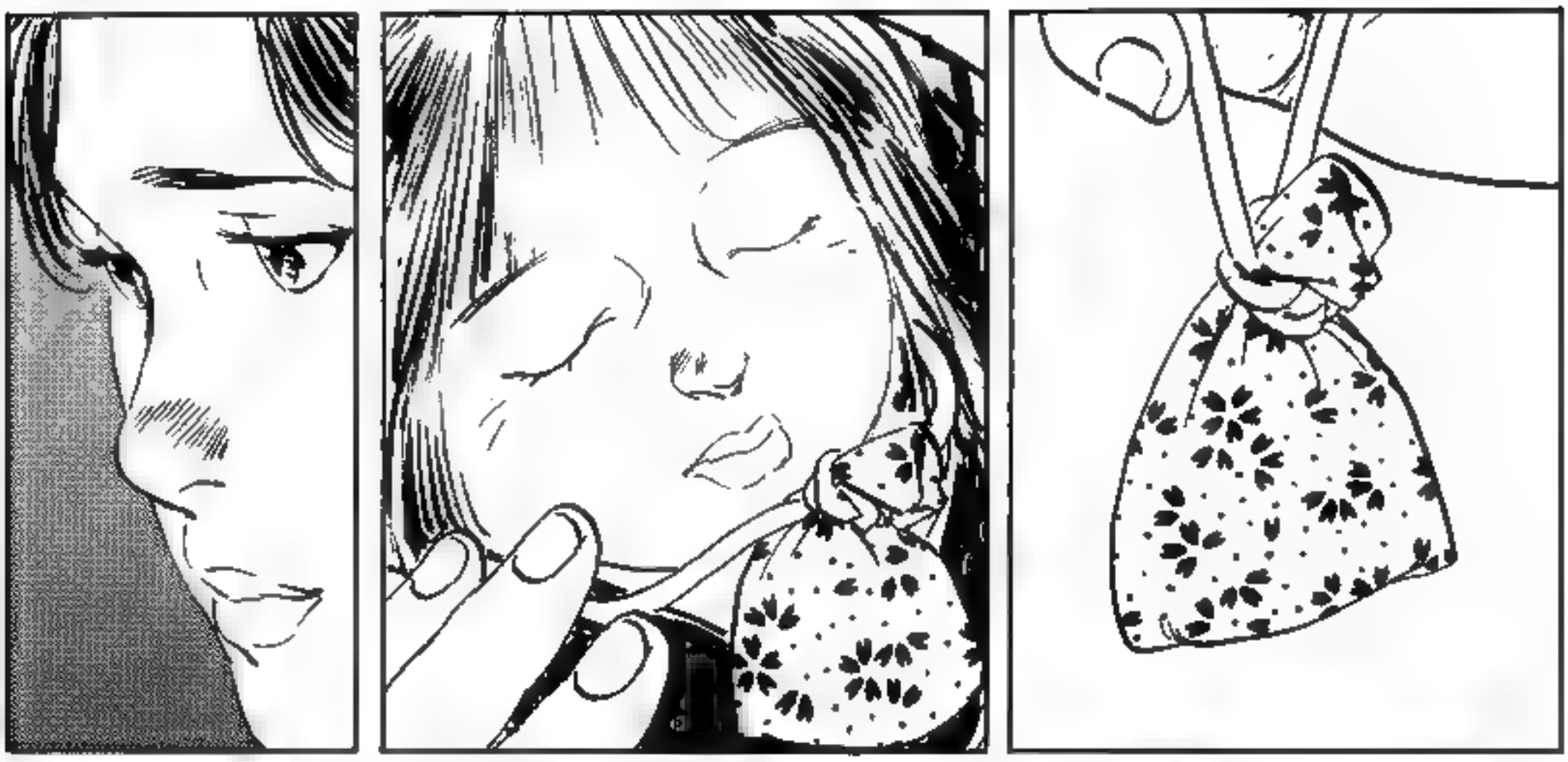
In the province of Mutsu, In Kurozuka, on the fields of Adachi, I heard there dwelt an oni, Could this be true?

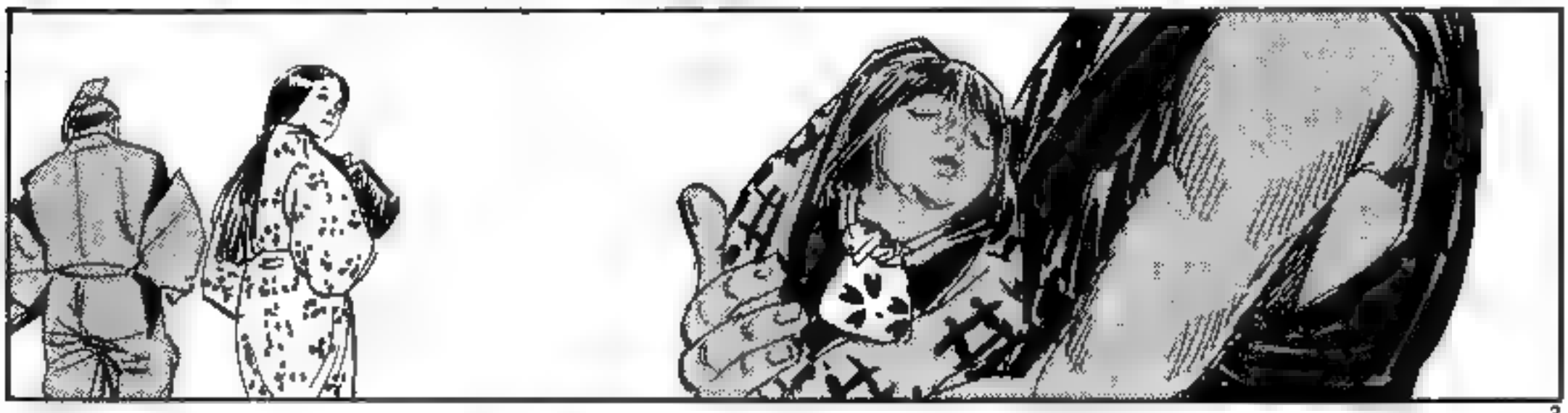
Taira no-Kanemori, of the Thirty Six Poetry Immortals

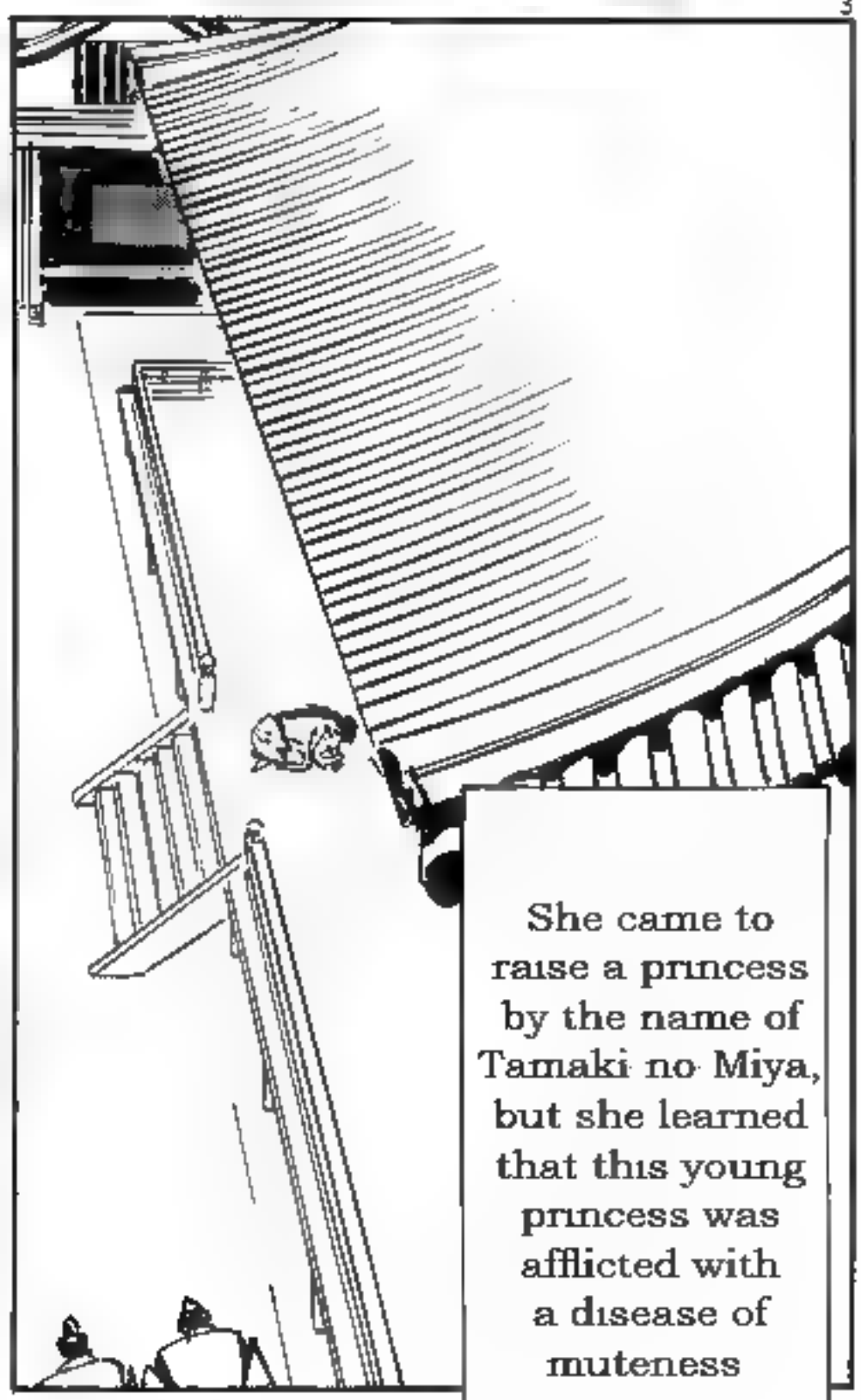
2

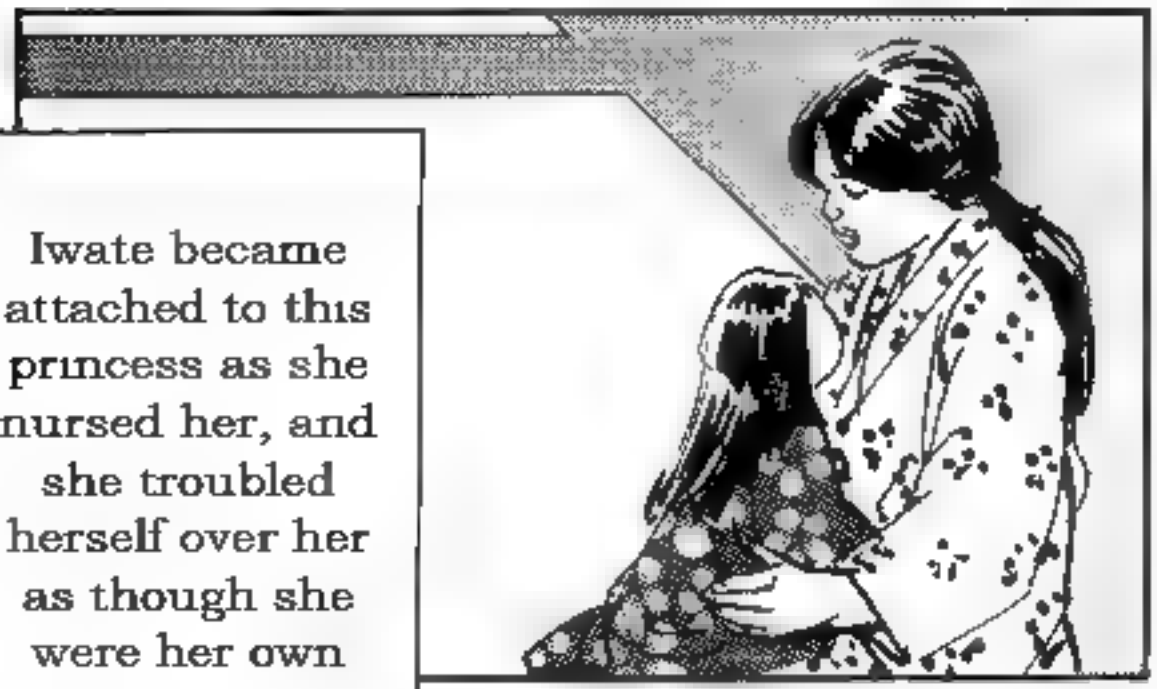
She gave birth to a daughter and lived in happiness, until she was solicited to become the wet nurse of a court noble

Long ago, in the capital, there lived a woman named "Iwate".






She came to raise a princess by the name of Tamaki no Miya, but she learned that this young princess was afflicted with a disease of muteness


Iwate became attached to this princess as she nursed her, and she troubled herself over her as though she were her own daughter...

"The child's illness can only be healed with the liver of an unborn human child "

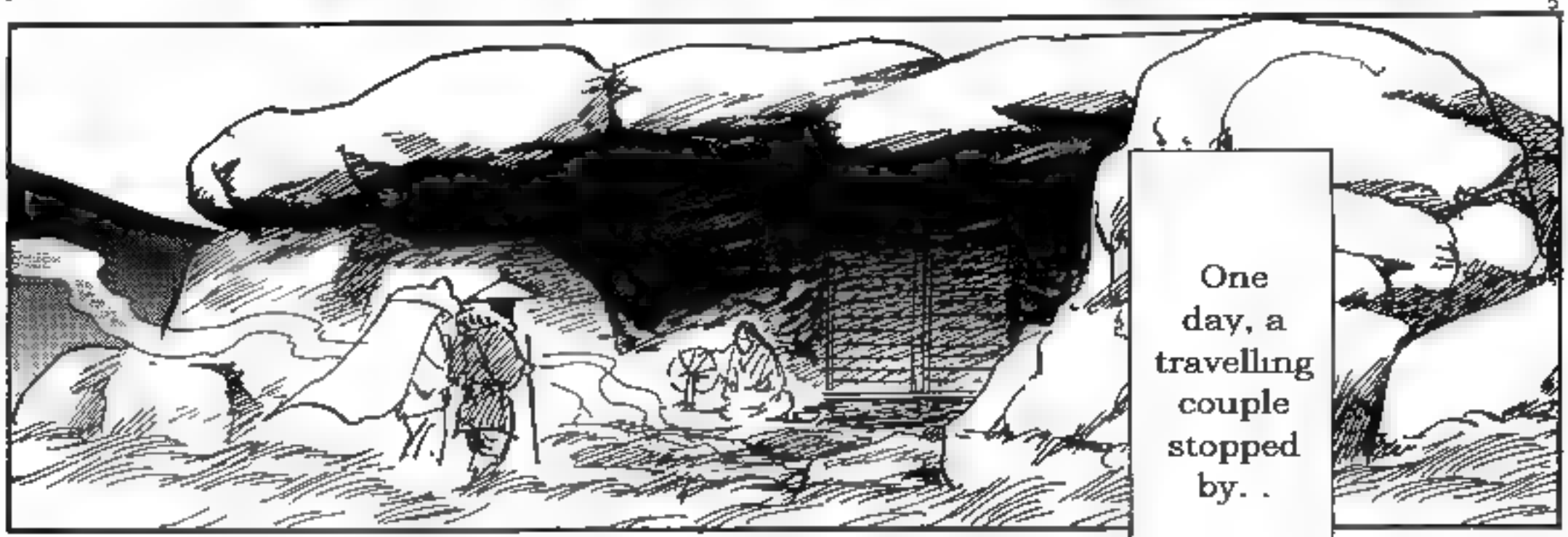
One day, she heard the unthinkable from a well reputed diviner at the crossroads

4

"The liver of an unborn human child . What a dreadful thing, but how can I find one without anyone know ing...?"

Iwate no longer knew how far from the Capital she had gone...

The years passed...



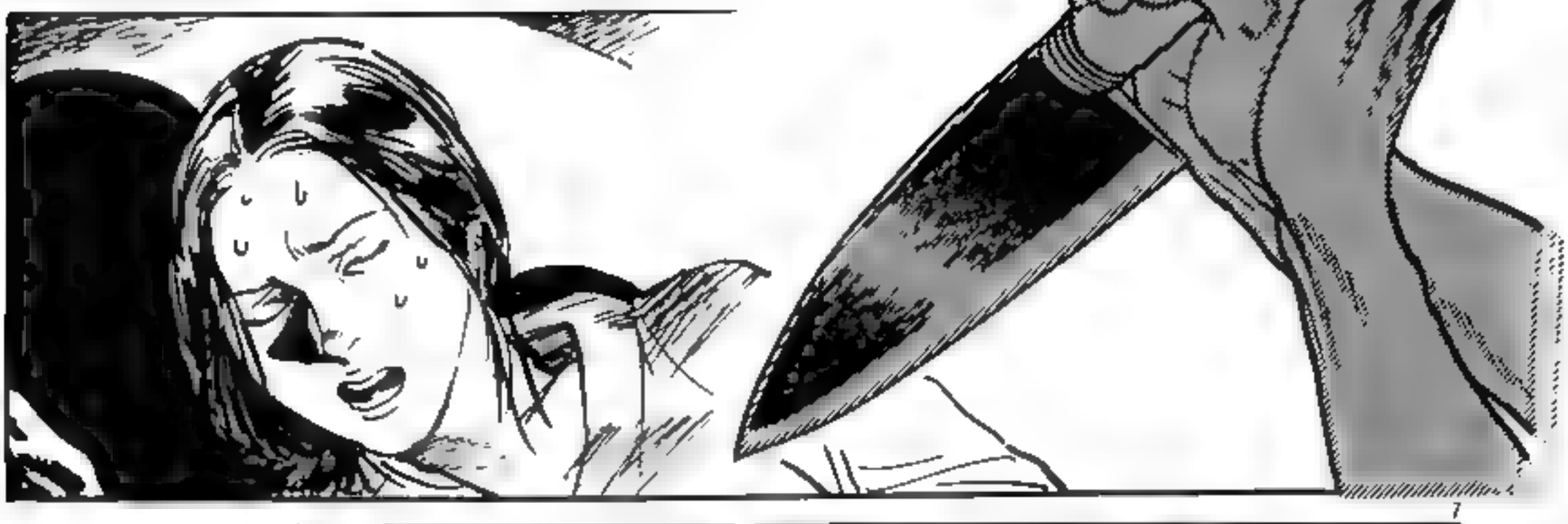
One day, a travelling couple stopped by. .

". .A pregnant woman!"

Out of concern for his pregnant wife Koiginu, the husband Ikomanosuke begged for a night's lodging

That night, Koiginu went into labor, and Iwate drove Ikomanosuke away to find herbs that could dull the pain.

6



"I I had come all this way in search of my mother, from whom I was sepa rated at birth "
"I wish she could have seen her grandchild .."

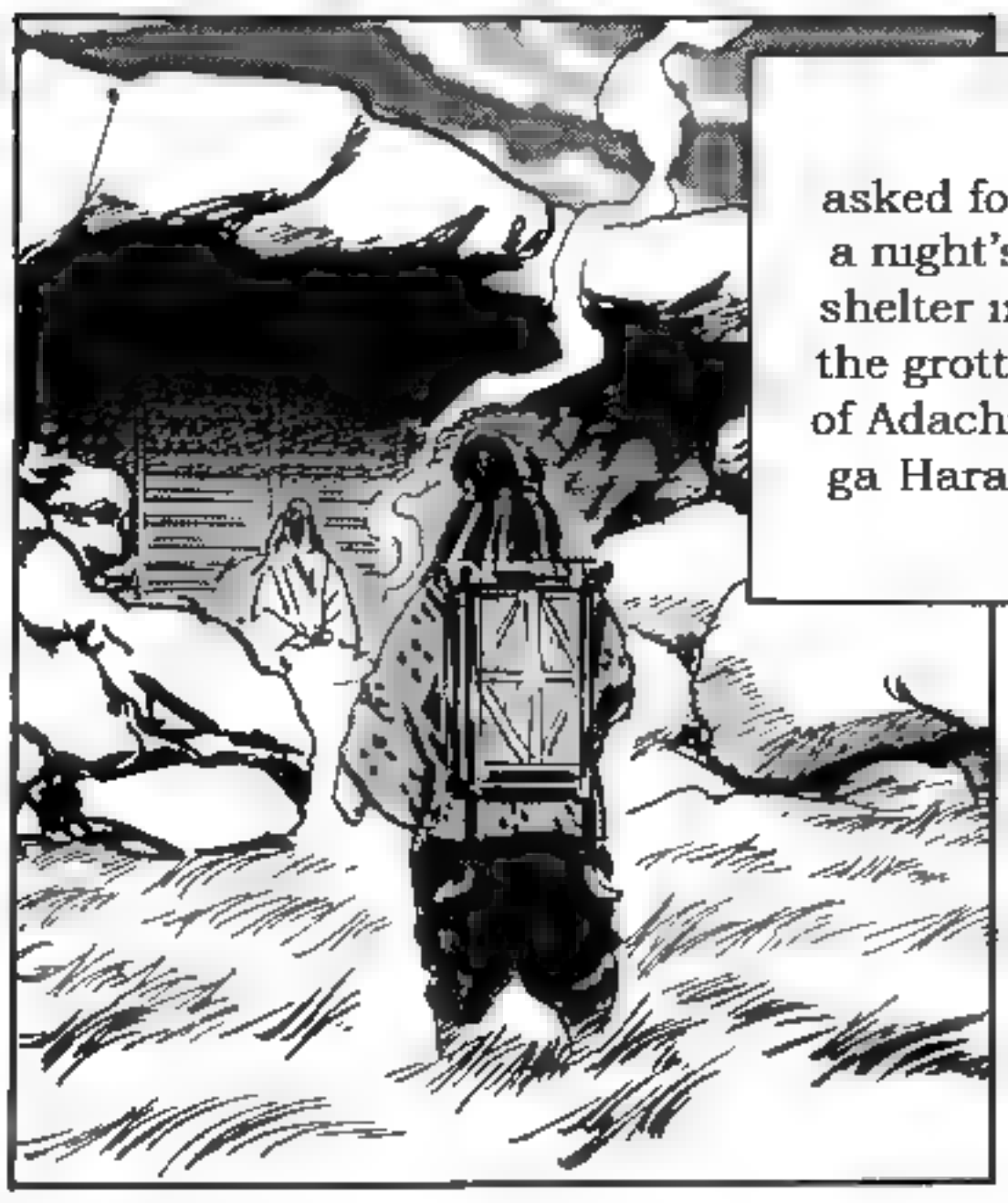
8

AH HH HH...

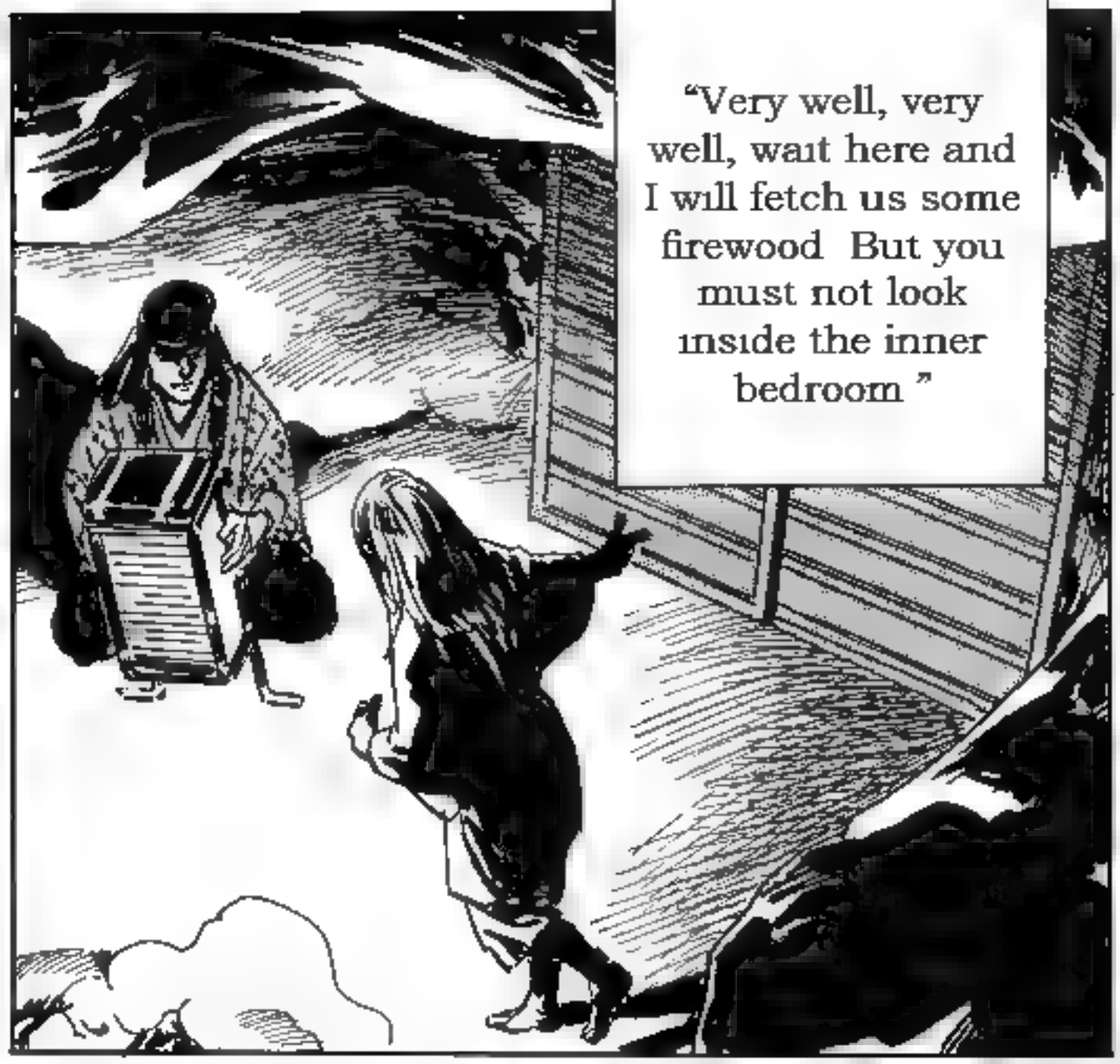
AHHHHHHHHHH HHHHHHHH!

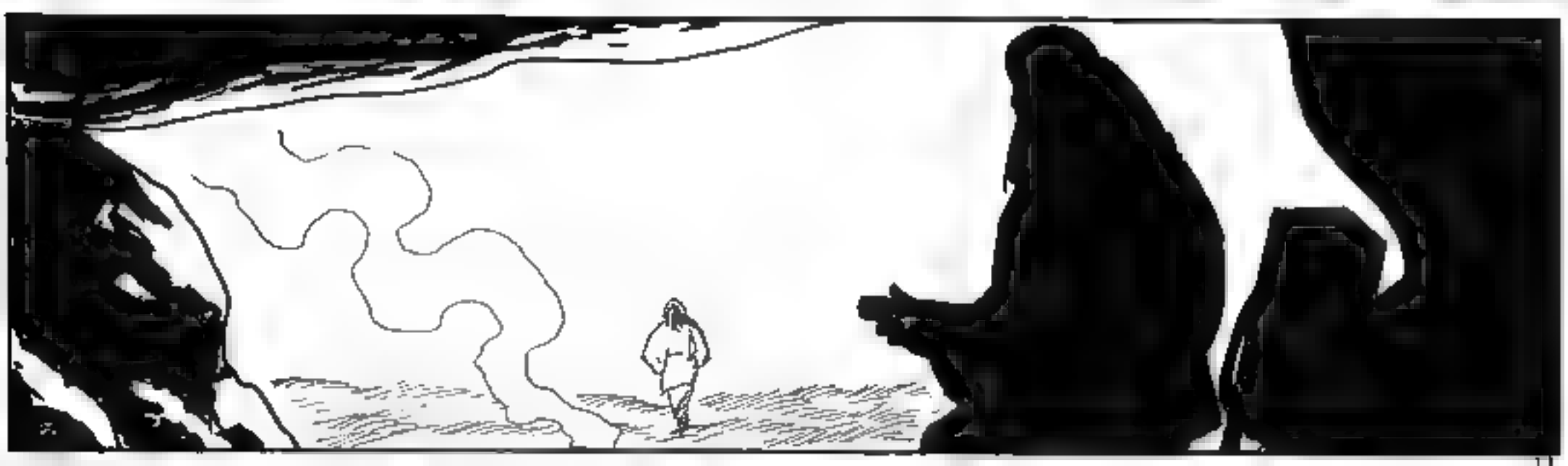
AUUUEEEE EEEEEEEEE!

One day, years later, a travelling monk named Tokobo Yukei



asked for a night's shelter in the grotto of Adachi ga Hara.


"Very well, very well, wait here and I will fetch us some firewood But you must not look inside the inner bedroom "



"...Those are the bones of devoured travellers!"

"So the rumors of a man eating hag in Adachi ga Hara are true.. !"

Having murdered her own daughter and grand child, Iwate had no choice but to become a demon.

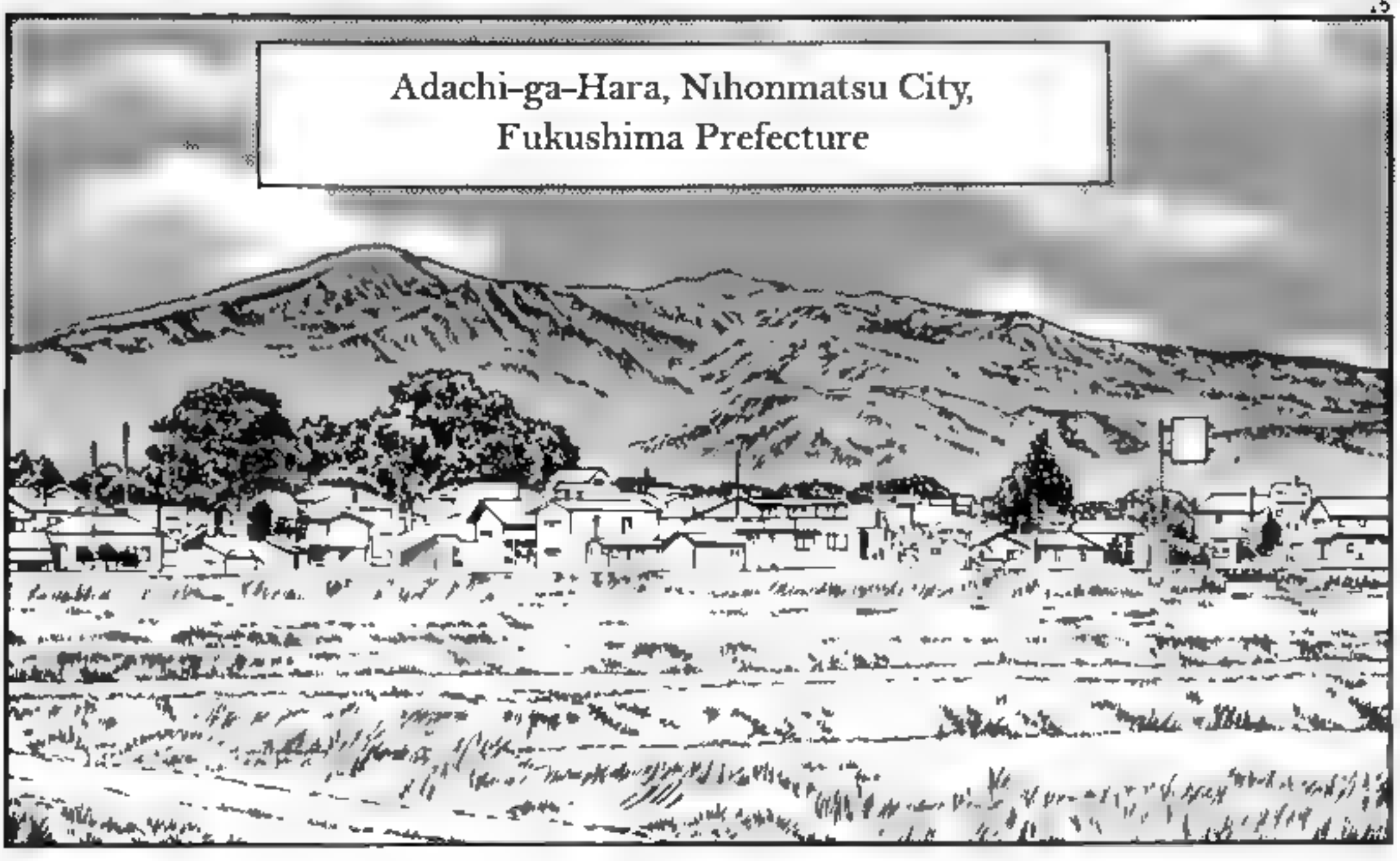
But to become a demon...

CIN-TAMANI-CAKRA! HAVE MERCY ON ME!

And so, the hag of Adachi ga Hara was buried, and the place was called "Kurozuka"..

.5

Adachi-ga-Hara, Nihonmatsu City, Fukushima Prefecture



P... Professor Munakata!

Did I keep you waiting, Professor Muna-kata?

KURO-ZUKA

Ahhhh, you scared me...

I was reading the tanka inscription of Kuro-zuka.

There's a plausible theory that the story of Iwate and Koiginu was a later fable.

In the province of Mutsu, In Kurozuka, on the fields of Adachi, I heard there dwelt an oni, Could this be true?

Some say that the "oni" in Taira-no-Kanemori's poem doesn't mean "demon", but rather "*bhikkuni*"... thus referring to a woman.

MUTSU PROVINCE, ADACHI-GA-HARA, KUROZUKA

I wouldn't go that far, but it's not even certain whether this was the setting of the legend.

S...So the story of the hag is an utterly unfounded lie?

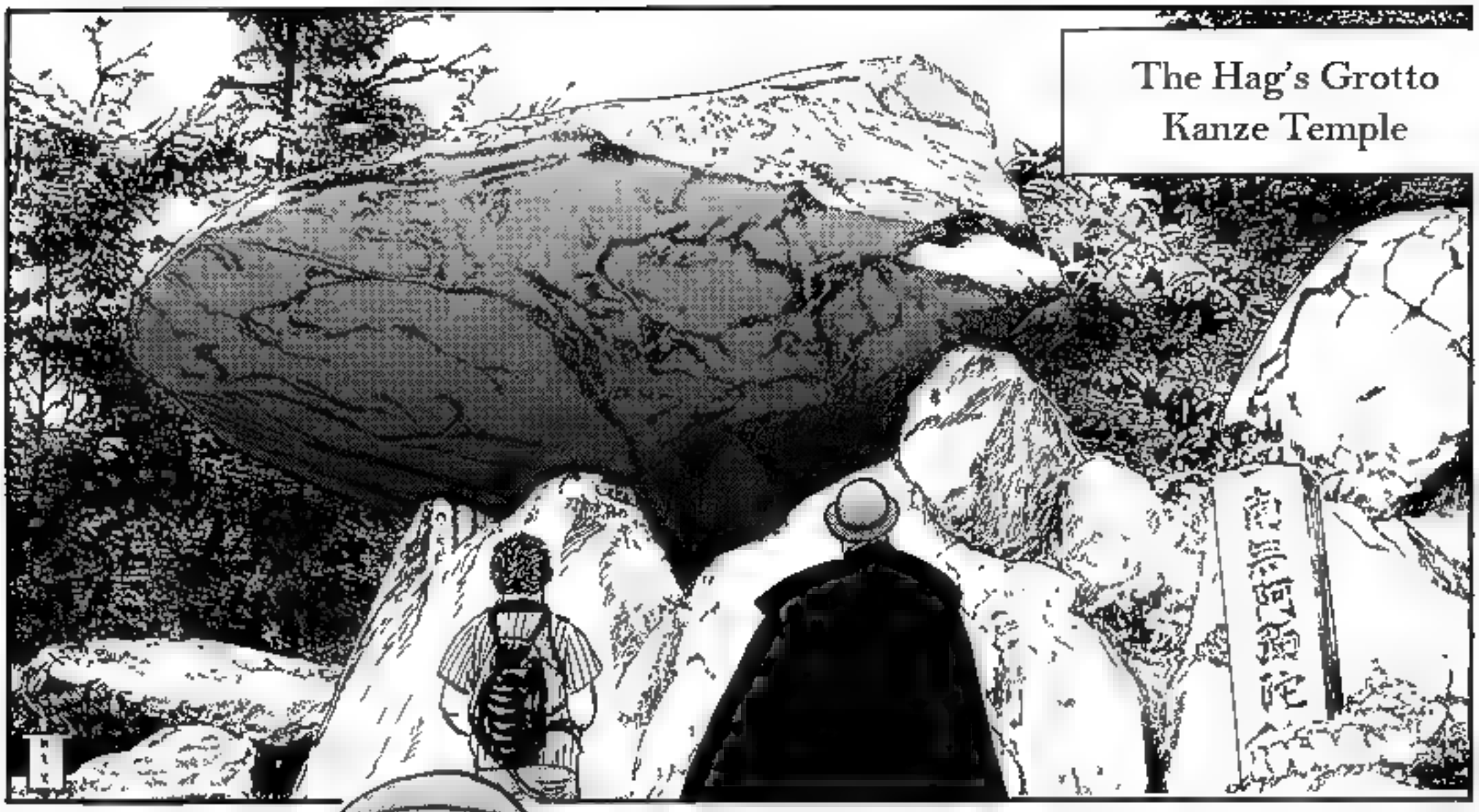
黒塚大黒天

There is a temple to Daikoku in Saitama Prefecture called "Mt. Kurozuka Daikoku Temple", and the region it's located in is not only called "Adachi-ga-Hara", but also has a legend of a hag.

No one's been able to determine beyond a shadow of a doubt which is the real "Adachi-ga-Hara".

Mt. Kurozuka
Daikoku Temple
Saitama City

SIGN: KUROZUKA DAIKOKU


The Hag's Grotto
Kanze Temple

But the first column topic you chose was the "Legend of the Hag"... What does iron have to do with the hag...??
I know your main research theme is the "culture and history of iron", and my magazine, "Big Literature", is asking you to do a serial column on iron...

O...Oh, I see! You mean the *tatara* bellows, right!? So that's the etymology of that name...
Adachi-ga-Hara is at the foot of Mt. Adatara. Adatara... That sounds almost like "tatara".

So I can't say it's completely unrelated to iron.

But of course, Mt. Adatara is bordered by "Mt. Tetsu" to the north, and there is also the "Kurogane Hot Springs" nearby, both of these names meaning "iron".

Obviously not. It's a pun I just came up with.

K...Key-words?

And I can't say that the Legend of the Hag is entirely fabricated. There are a number of critical keywords woven in to the story, Yokozuki.

Then murder and repulsive cannibalism.

Then there's conception...

The first is the knife... An "iron tool".

But what they called a knife appears to be an ancient sword called a "bracken sword".

This temple has an exhibition of the hag's knife, and even the pot in which she cooked the human flesh...

Bracken sword...?

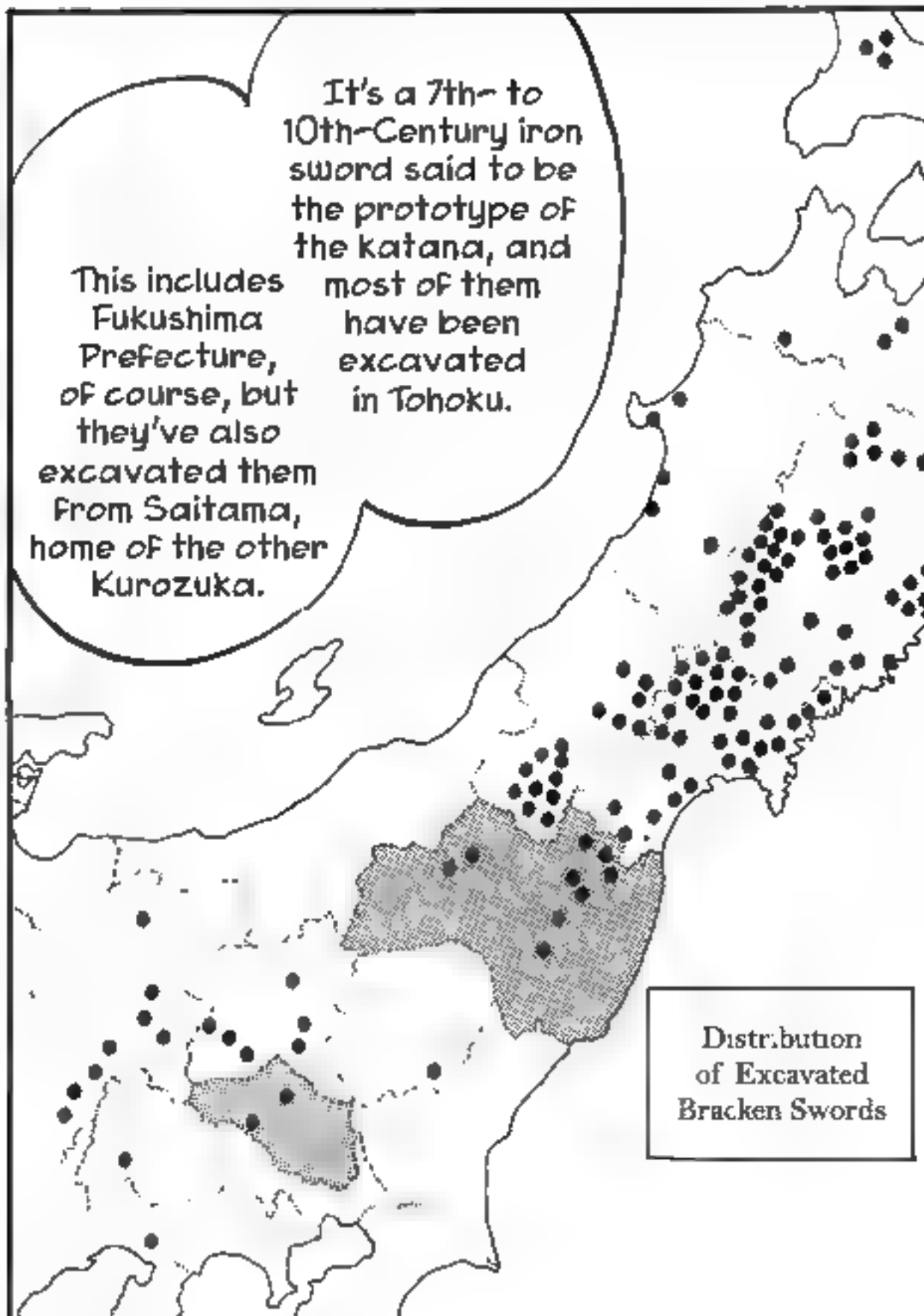
20

Y... Yeah.

Are you starting to see a little bit of a connection between the Legend of the Hag and iron-age civilization?

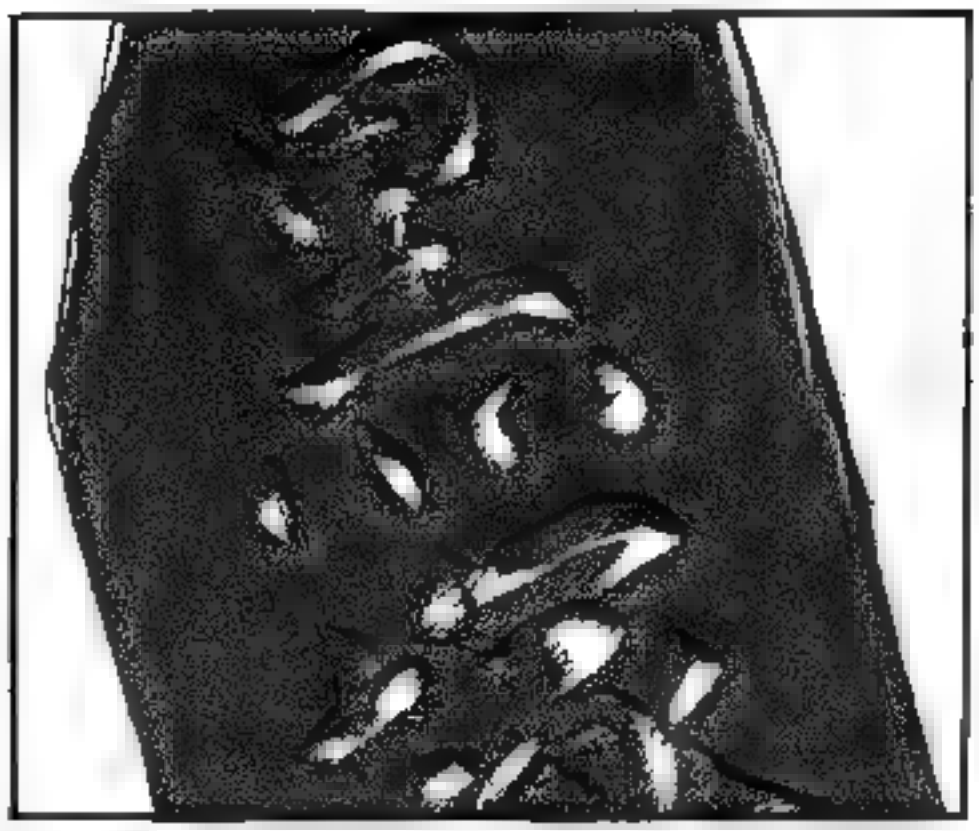
It's a 7th- to 10th-Century iron sword said to be the prototype of the katana, and most of them have been excavated in Tohoku.

This includes Fukushima Prefecture, of course, but they've also excavated them from Saitama, home of the other Kurozuka.

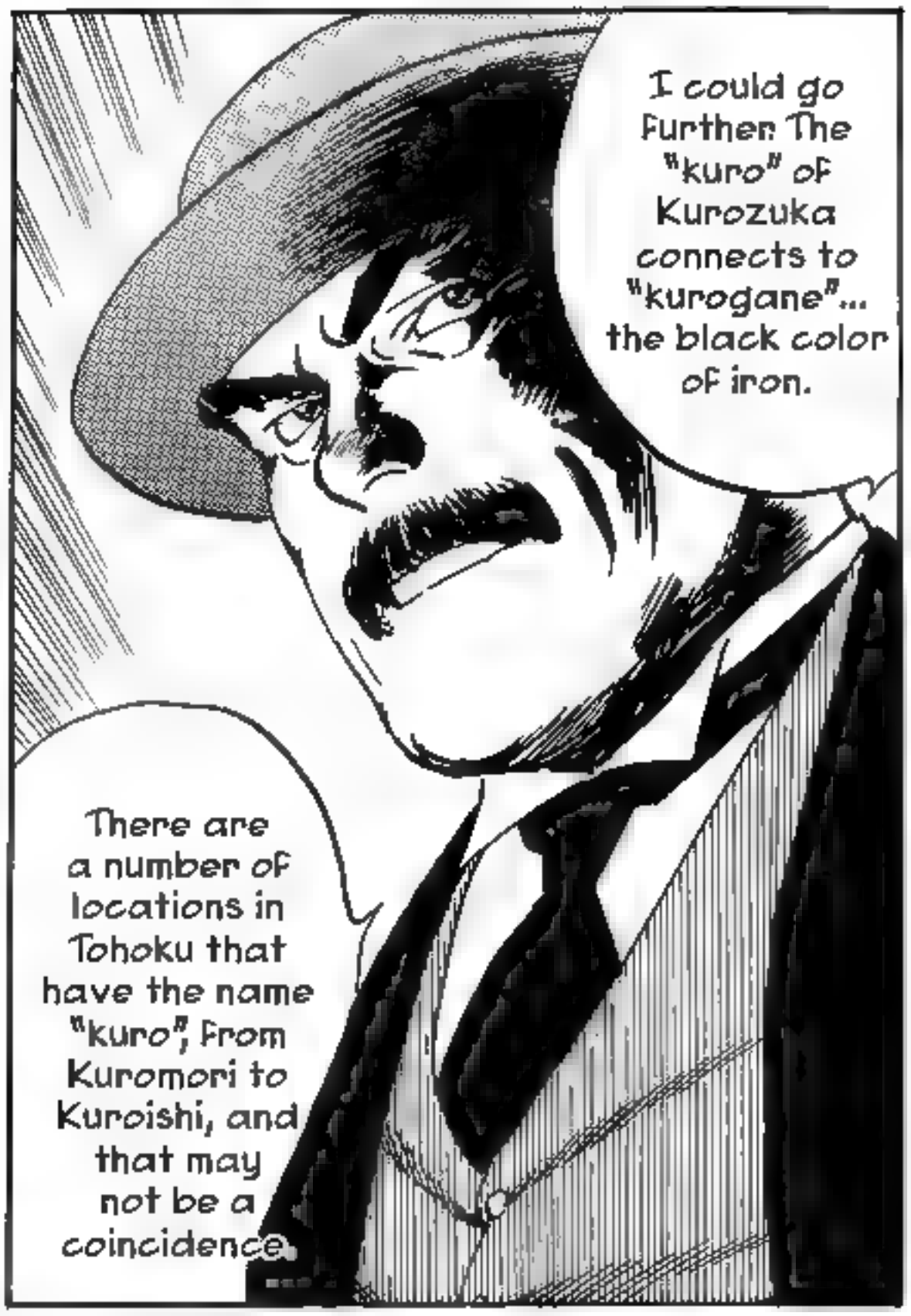


Distribution of Excavated Bracken Swords

SIGN. KUROZUKA



SIGN DAIKOKU


I could go further. The "kuro" of Kurozuka connects to "kurogane"... the black color of iron.
There are a number of locations in Tohoku that have the name "kuro", from Kuromori to Kuroishi, and that may not be a coincidence.

It's as if they had buried something terribly sinister there...
On the other hand, "zuka" represents a grave, and its combination with the color black gives off an ominous image.

It might be stress-induced diarrhea...

Oh, uhh, not so loud, please...

Going to the washroom again, Yokozuki? Did you eat something that your stomach doesn't agree with?

But that bald mustached professor is just plain stiff, and he always launches into the most tedious stories, piling up stress on me...

Dr Imibe Kana may be a little bit bossy, but at least she'd let me enjoy some good food and hot springs.

Eep!

Ahhh ...

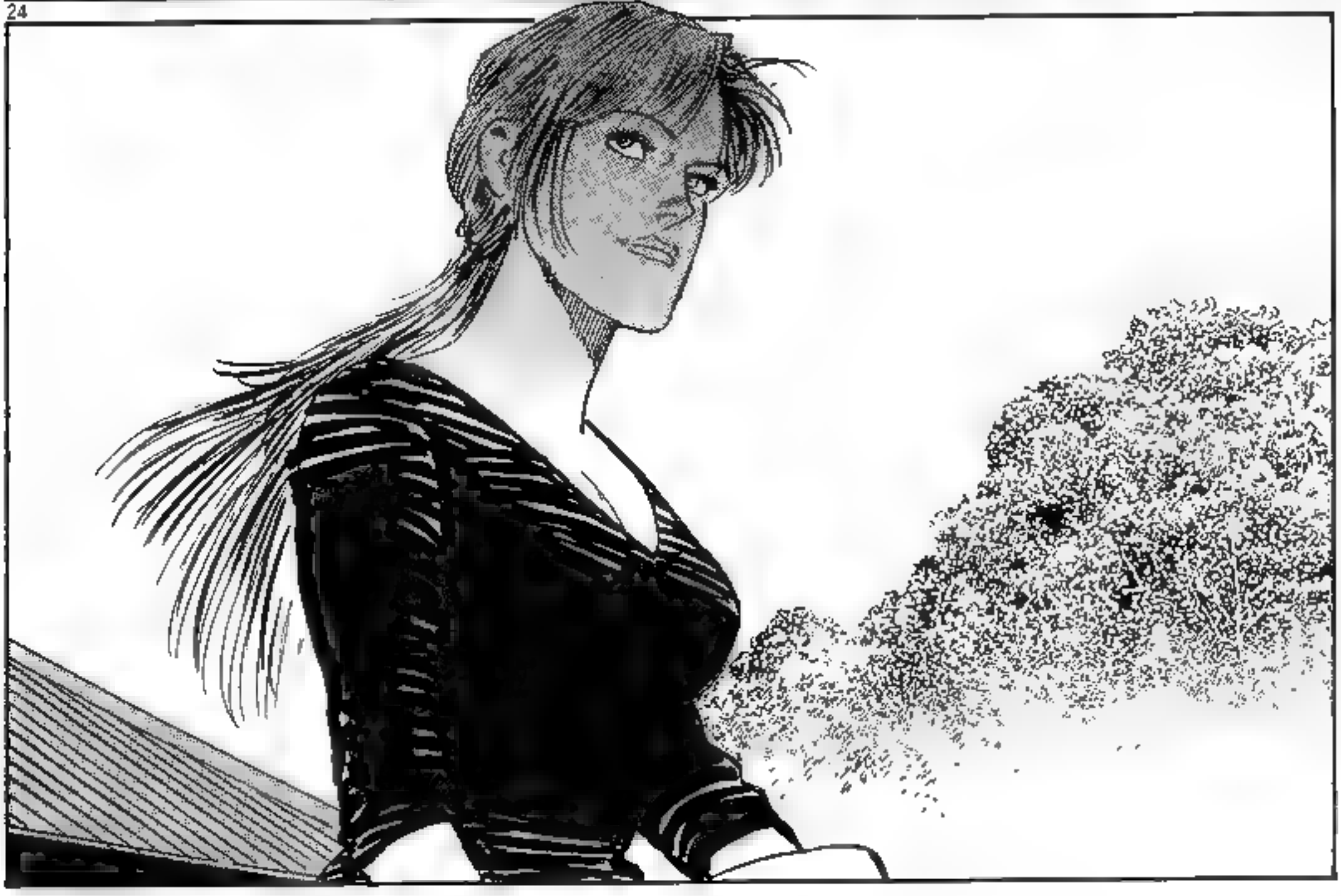
I...It's leak-ing...

Then allow this bald mustached professor to accompany you to the washroom.

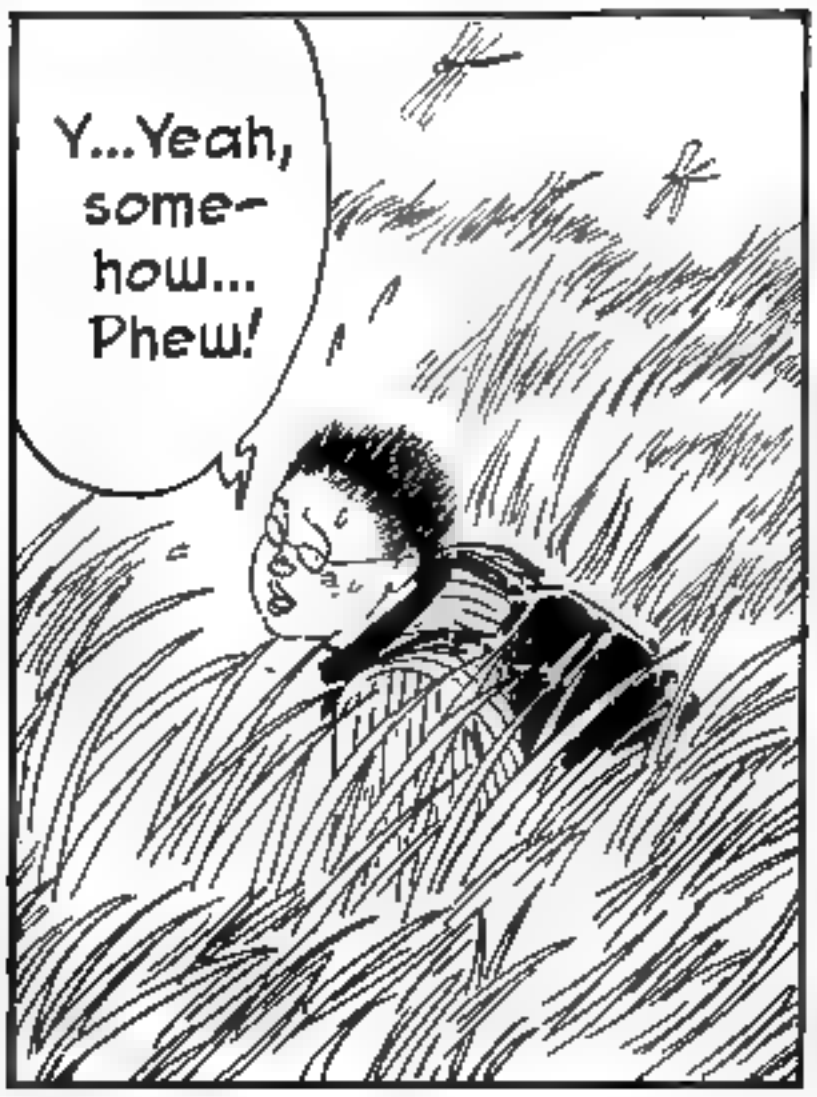
Once you've done your business, we're heading east. Haramachi City and Futaba District have the remains of the largest iron-works in Japan, and they've uncovered 100 tons of iron slag from the site.

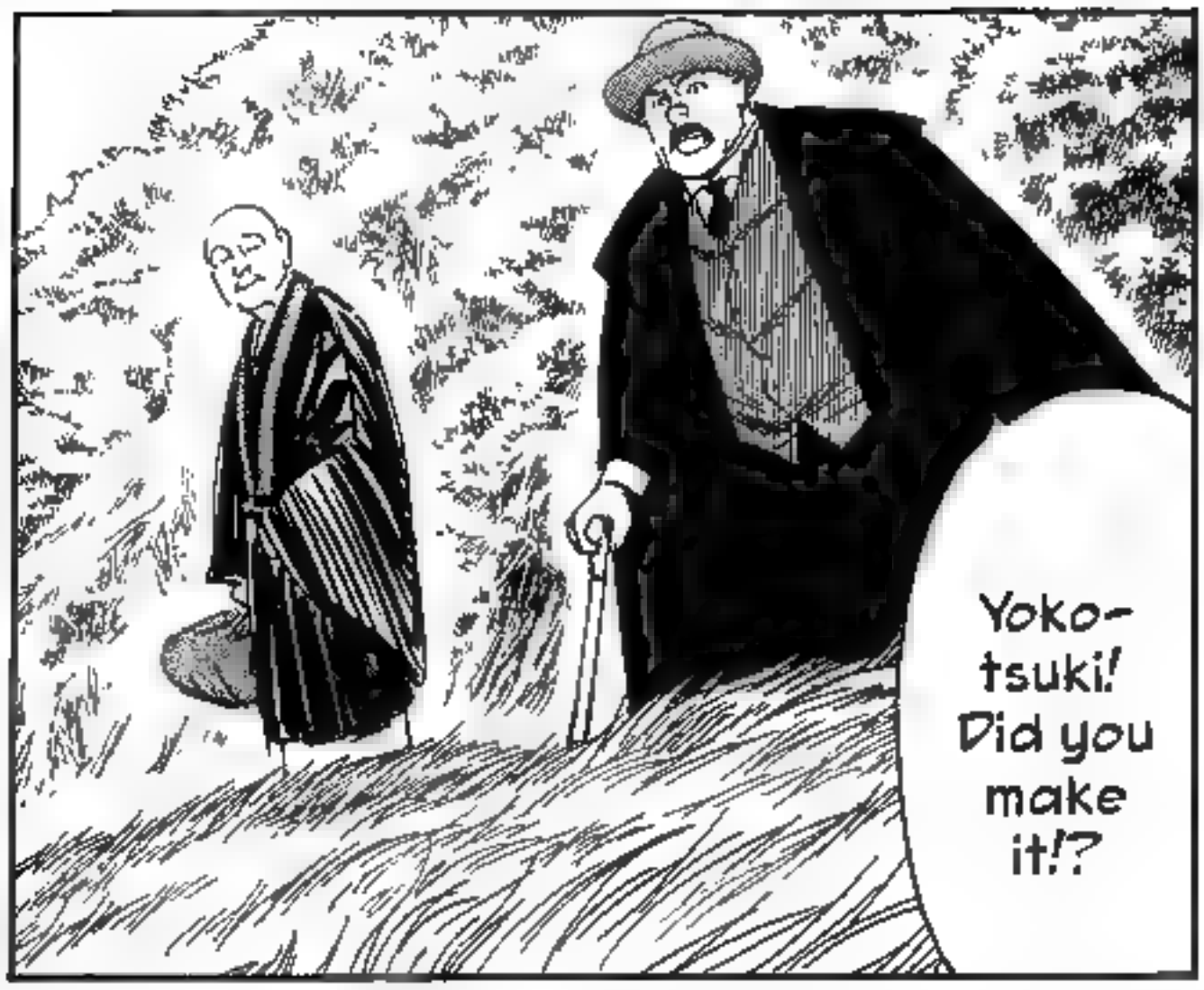
I'll explain the Legend of the Hag along the way.

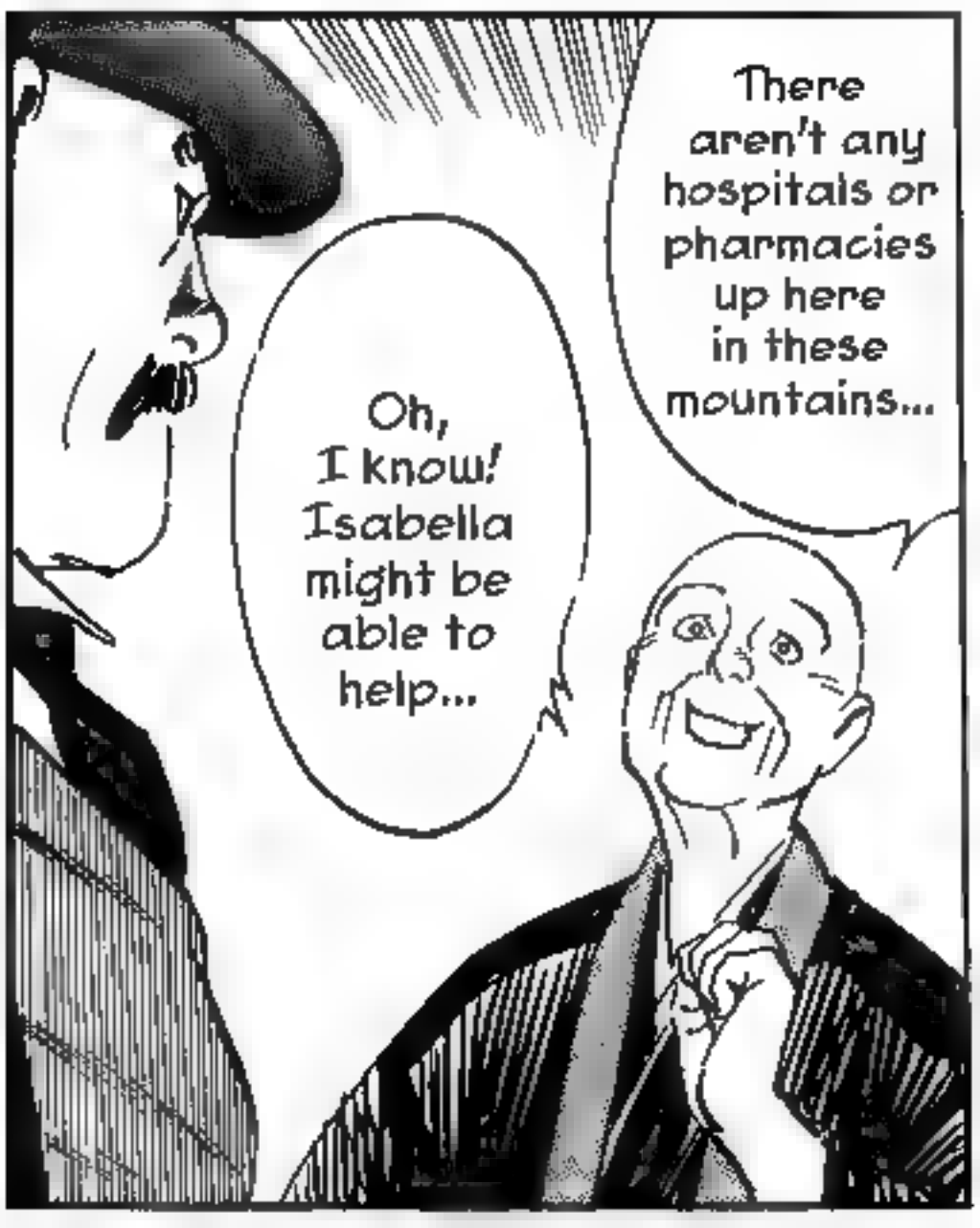
24



Outskirts of Haramachi City,
near Yokoyama
Fukushima Prefecture


Y...Yeah, some-how... Phew!


Yoko-tsuki! Did you make it!?


There aren't any hospitals or pharmacies up here in these mountains...
Oh, I know! Isabella might be able to help...

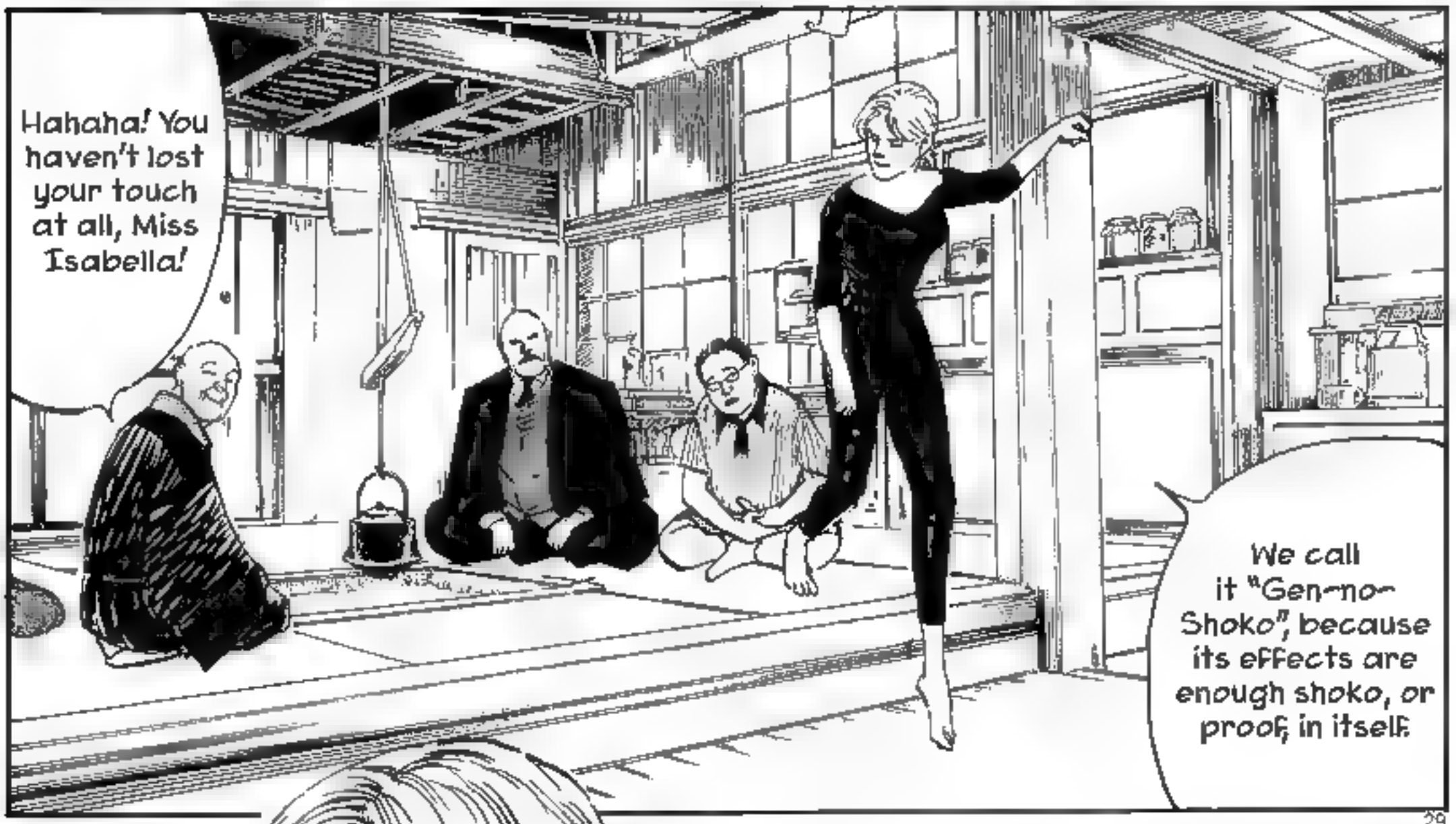
I'm not sure...
Your companion appeared to be in pain on the bus. Is he alright?

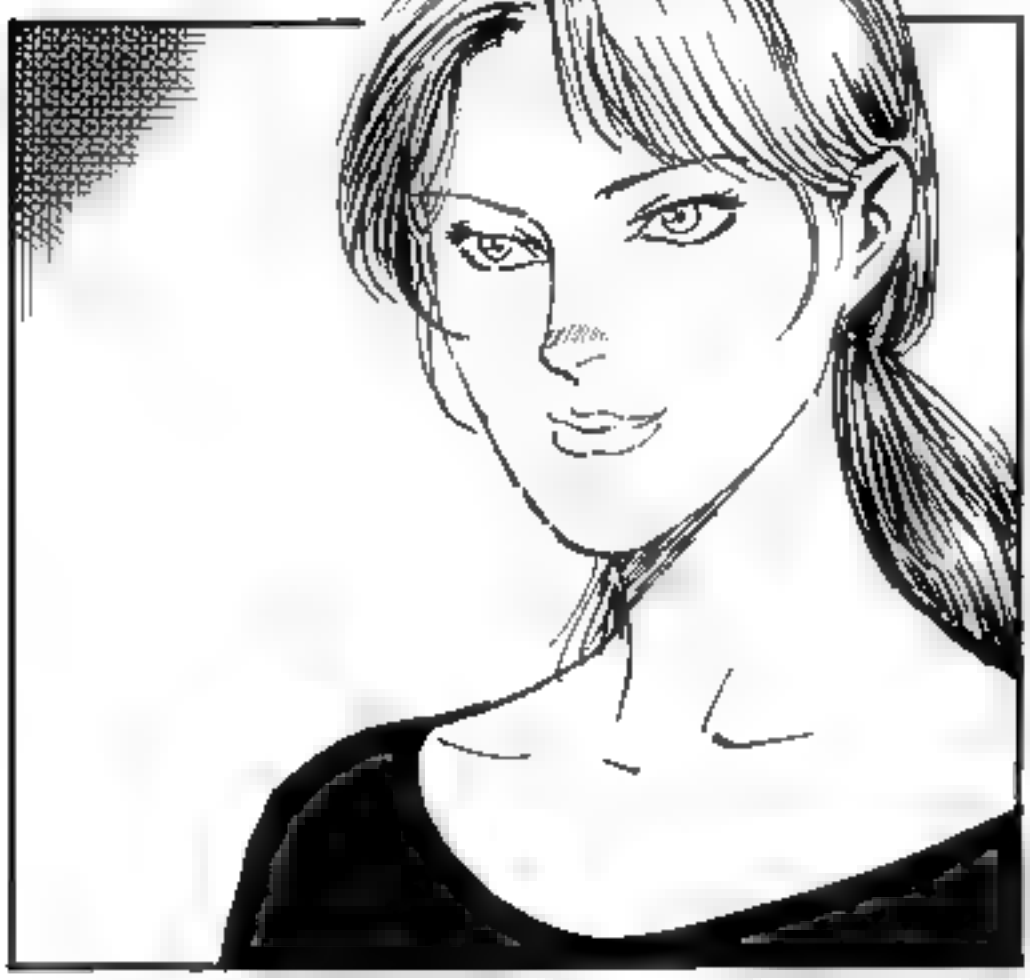
Isabella ...?

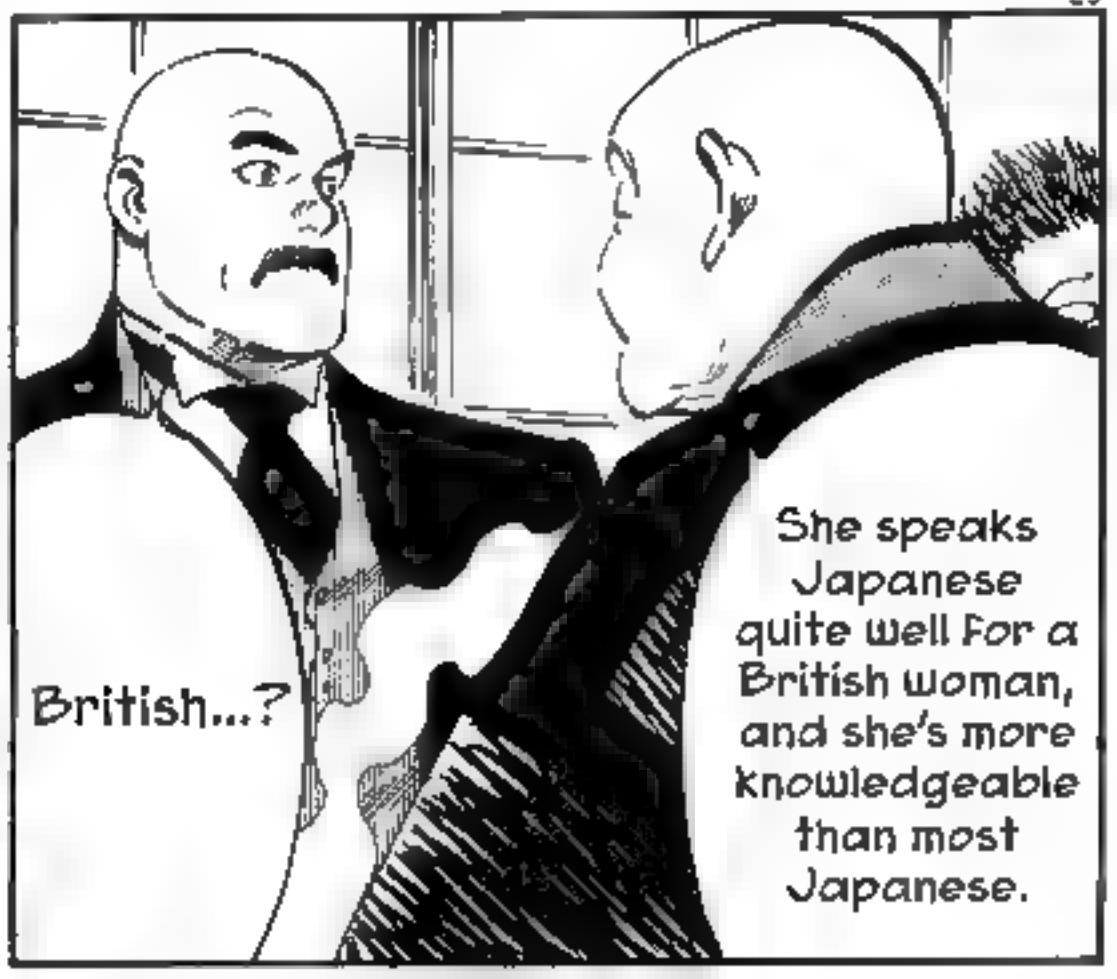
Three visitors...

28

Boiling and drinking the herb called "Geranium thunbergii" is very good for diarrhea.


Hahaha! You haven't lost your touch at all, Miss Isabella!
We call it "Gen-no-Shoko", because its effects are enough shoko, or proof, in itself.




British...?
She speaks Japanese quite well for a British woman, and she's more knowledgeable than most Japanese.

Urk...

...Yes, yes. That's something I really wish some magazine editors would listen to.

Just drink your herbs and get some rest. I'd better get back to the temple...

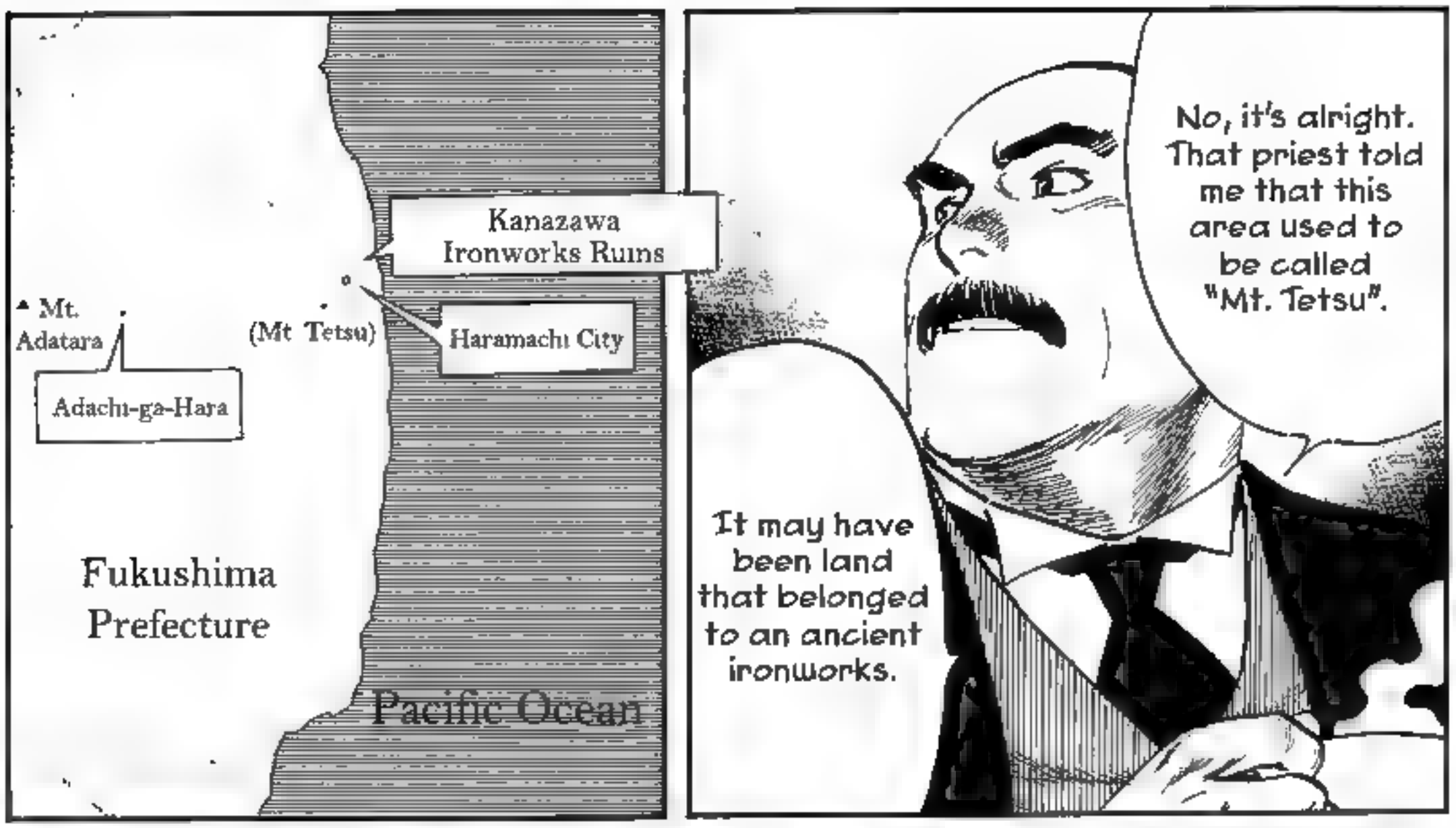
Japanese history intrigues me as well... There's a lot I want to know about it.

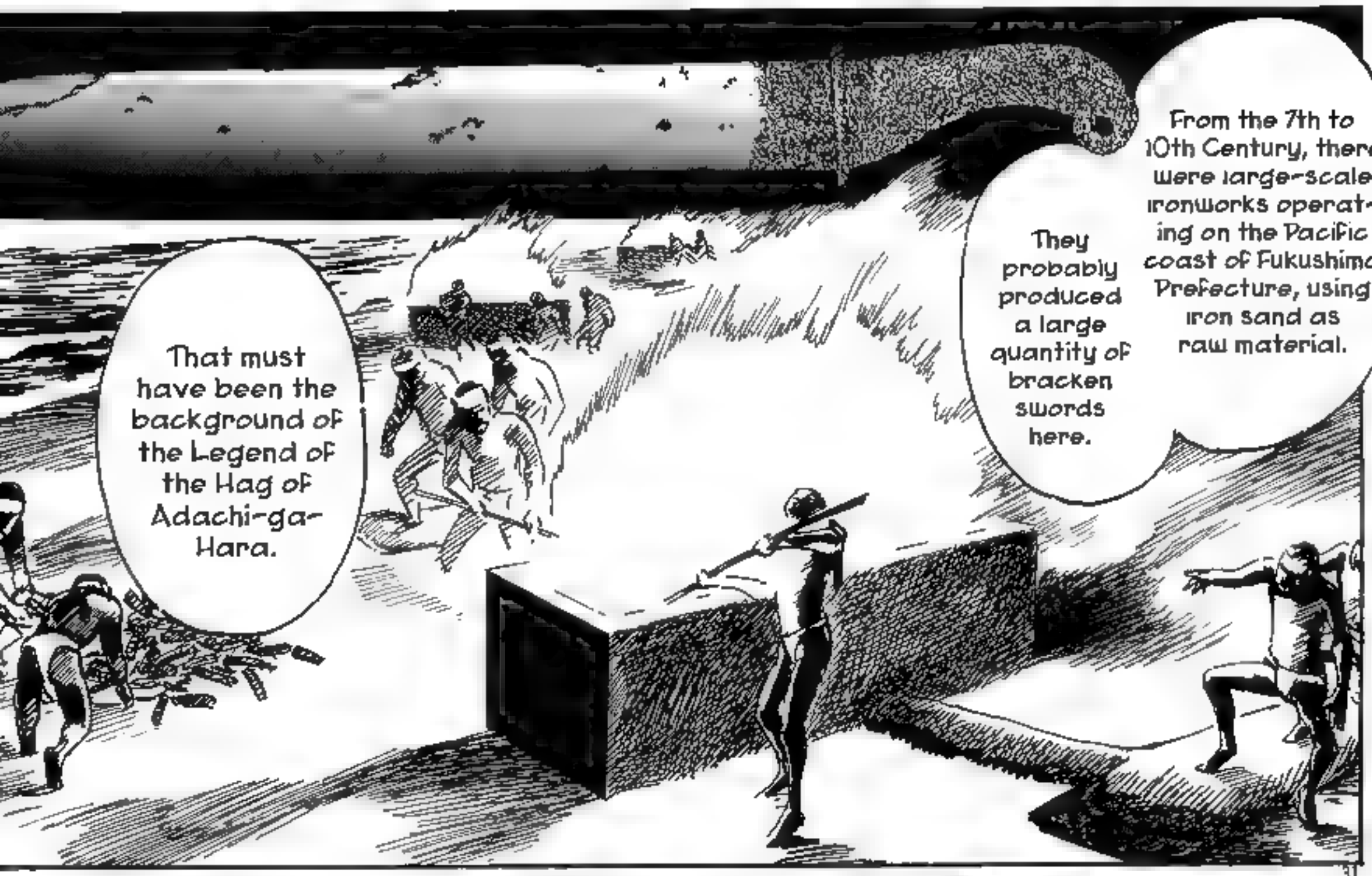
I've lived in Japan for ten years now. Before that, I was a student studying European history.

I...I'm sorry, Professor Munakata. We're going to have to put off covering the ironworks in Haramachi...

So long, Isabella! I'll come back soon with a bottle of sake! Hahaha!

Thank you, Mr. Nanjaku.


Kanazawa Ironworks Ruins
Haramachi City
(Mt Tetsu)
Mt. Adatara
Adachi-ga-Hara
Fukushima Prefecture
Pacific Ocean
No, it's alright. That priest told me that this area used to be called "Mt. Tetsu".
It may have been land that belonged to an ancient ironworks.


From the 7th to 10th Century, there were large-scale ironworks operating on the Pacific coast of Fukushima Prefecture, using iron sand as raw material.
They probably produced a large quantity of bracken swords here.
That must have been the background of the Legend of the Hag of Adachi-ga-Hara.

But recently, they've found ruins on a similar scale in Niigata...

Speaking of Niigata, Yokozuki...

This was a massive ironworks site from the Nara to Kamakura periods, where they excavated over 100 tons of iron slag alone.

The "South Karuigawa Ruins" of Kashiwazaki City, Niigata.

There's a legend, mainly around Mt. Yahiko in Niigata, of "Yasaburo and the Hag".

Y...Yasaburo and the Hag...?

The blacksmith Kurozu Yasaburo eventually yielded, but this infuriated Yasaburo's grandmother

Yahiko Shrine, on Mt Yahiko...

There was a struggle of power between the blacksmiths and the carpenters over its construction

She attacked the carpenters one after another, until she lost her mind, and even attacked Yasaburo and his son, her own relatives

Yasaburo cut off one of her arms, but she escaped on a black cloud She was feared for eighty years after that as the "Hag of Yahiko", who would make off with corpses and children to eat...

Blacksmiths... Kurozu Yasaburo... Here we see the images of "iron" and "black" as well.

KUROZU

There are legends of cannibalistic hags from ancient ironwork sites, in both Fukushima and Niigata... Don't you find that amusing?

Yeah...

Similar tales to Yasaburo and the Hag spread from Niigata throughout the nation, and one such tale is the legend of the "Hag of the Forge", in Kochi, Shikoku.

...May I hear more about this, too?

...Of course you may.

In Shikoku. . In the mountains between Muroto and Mt. None..

A courier noticed young woman in pain.

He pushed her on top of a giant cedar, where she gave birth. .

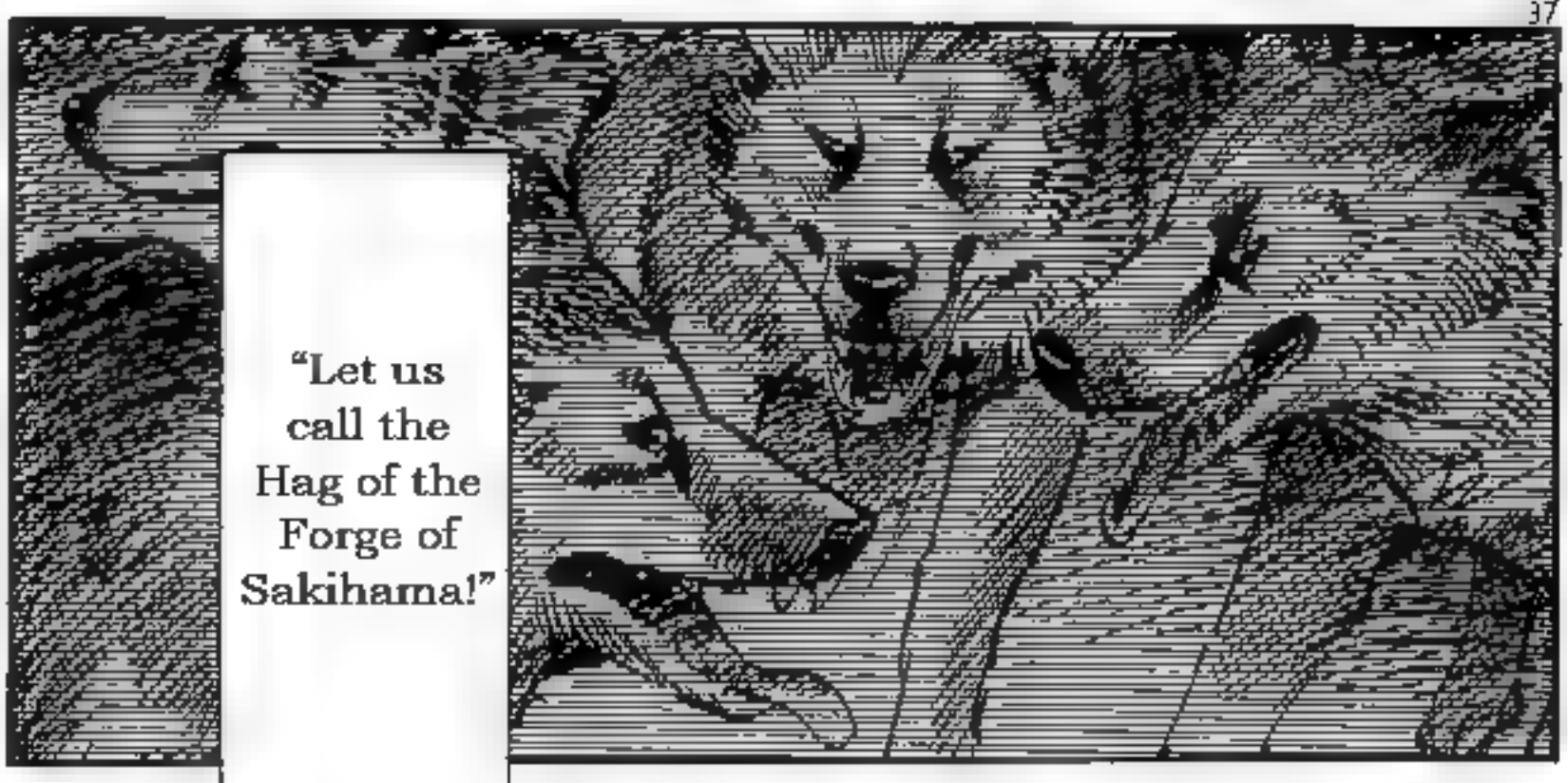
She had gone into labor this deep in the moun tains.

The hunter knew that there were soldiers in those mountains

As he nursed the mother and child, the sun had set.

"He is strong .. "
"We cannot eat the delicious mother and child."

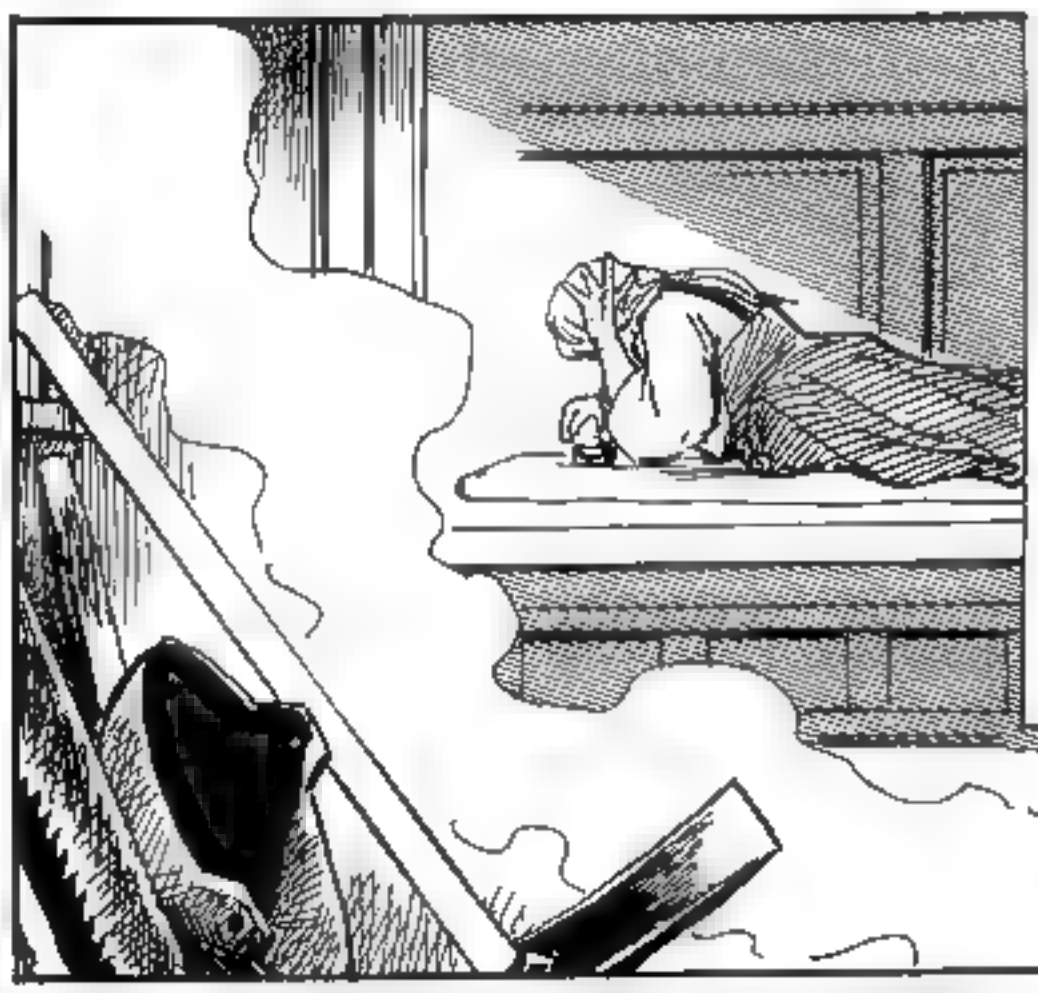
The courier could hear what the wolves were saying


"Let us call the Hag of the Forge of Sakihama!"

There came a larger wolf, wearing an iron pan on its head!

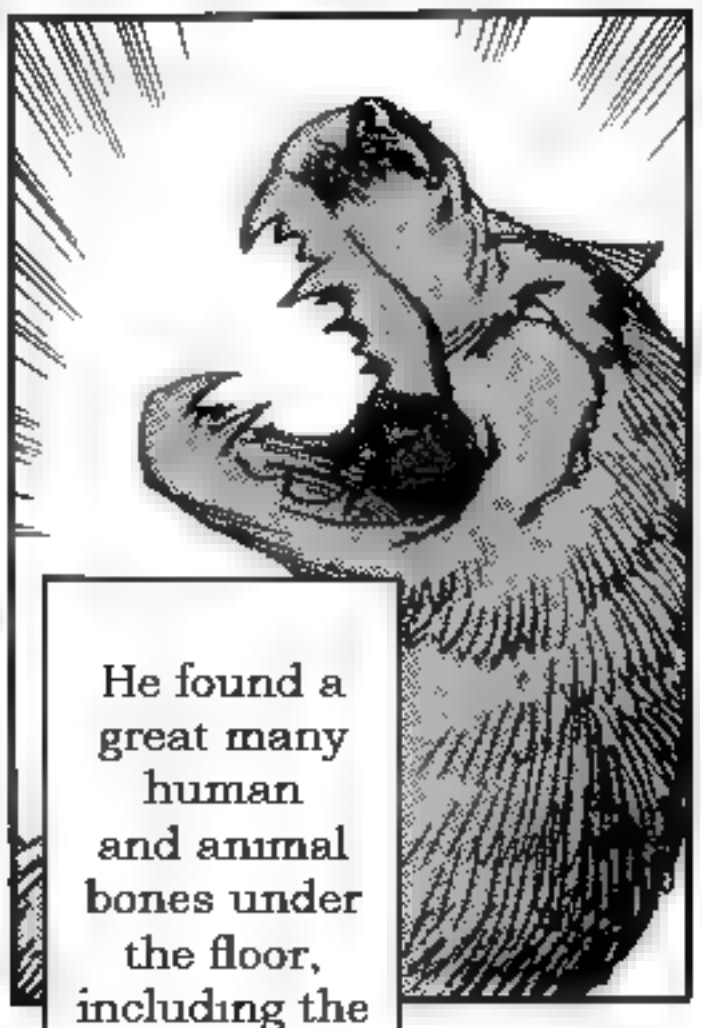
The courier desperately struck the pan over and over!

The large wolf had disguised itself as an old woman.



The next day, the courier found the forge of Sakihama that the wolves spoke of, and saw an old woman sleeping with an injured head

39



He found a great many human and animal bones under the floor, including the old woman's

Don't you see the commonalities with the Legend of the Hag?

Pregnancy...

The forge and a pan... Iron tools.

And cannibalism.

These all point toward...

From time immemorial, the farmers saw the strange lifestyles of the ironworkers, who made iron tools out of iron sands like magic, and often spoke of them with the image of "demons".

41

But of course, there were secret liaisons between the people of the village and the demons.

Discreet pregnancies, unwanted children. .

They needed women who could let these pass from darkness to darkness

The people of Yaku Island once believed that these pregnancies could be aborted by boiling the slag from iron production, called "kanakuso", with the leaves of weeping willow, and drinking them.

Whatever the method, they must have relied on the magic and the reclusion of the ironworkers to conduct these secret procedures.

Once the ironworkers had moved on, and the small bones were found, they must have given off a dreadful image to the people.
But...
I...
The women that aborted children and buried them in darkness passed into legend as "hags" that ate children...

Yes, what is it?
I...!
43
I GOTTA USE THE WASH-ROOM!!

Witches... As in, European witches?

these hags are very similar to "witches".

...Professor Munakata,

Many villages had women with a knowledge of herbs, who would help the sick and assist in childbirth.

They would abort children if asked...

44

You could say that the villagers were getting rid of the abominable women, who knew too many of their shames and sins, out of mass hysteria.

These were the women that were indicted as witches in the witch hunts.

Have you heard of the "Jack the Ripper" case from 19th-Century London?

Of course, I've heard of it...

At the time of these serial killings, where prostitutes were found brutally ripped open, there was a theory that the culprit was a midwife that had agreed to perform abortions for these prostitutes.

Perhaps people, then as much as now, are always seeking a "hag" that can serve as a scapegoat for their sins...

Hmm...

But what happened? What could have triggered it...?

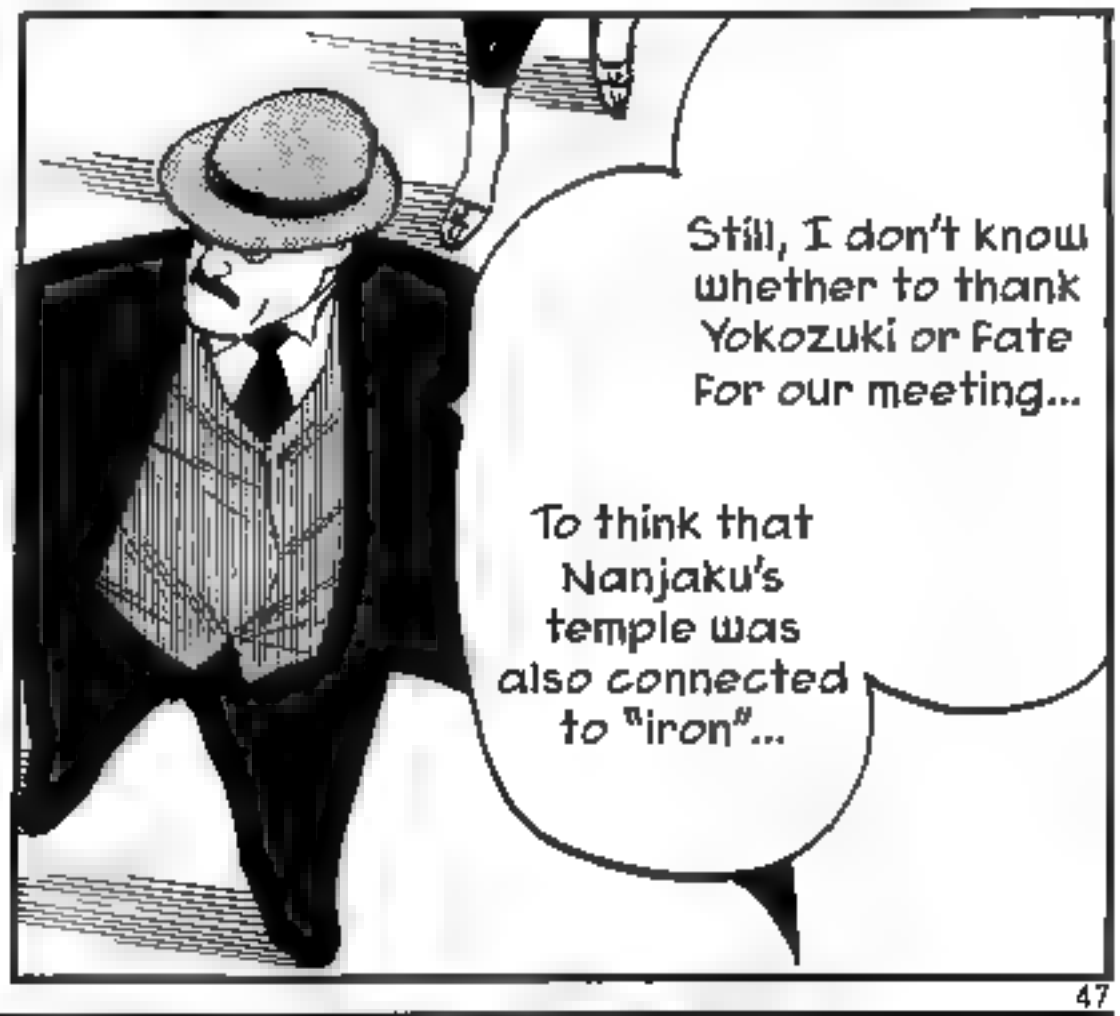
Many of the ancient ironworkers were settlers from the continent. Perhaps there was a "witch hunt" in Japan that arose from their xenophobia...

But the wild dogs living in the mountains don't discriminate against me...

T...That's not true, Isabella...

The same goes for me... Since I live alone in this backwater village, I wouldn't be surprised if people suspected me of being a "witch".

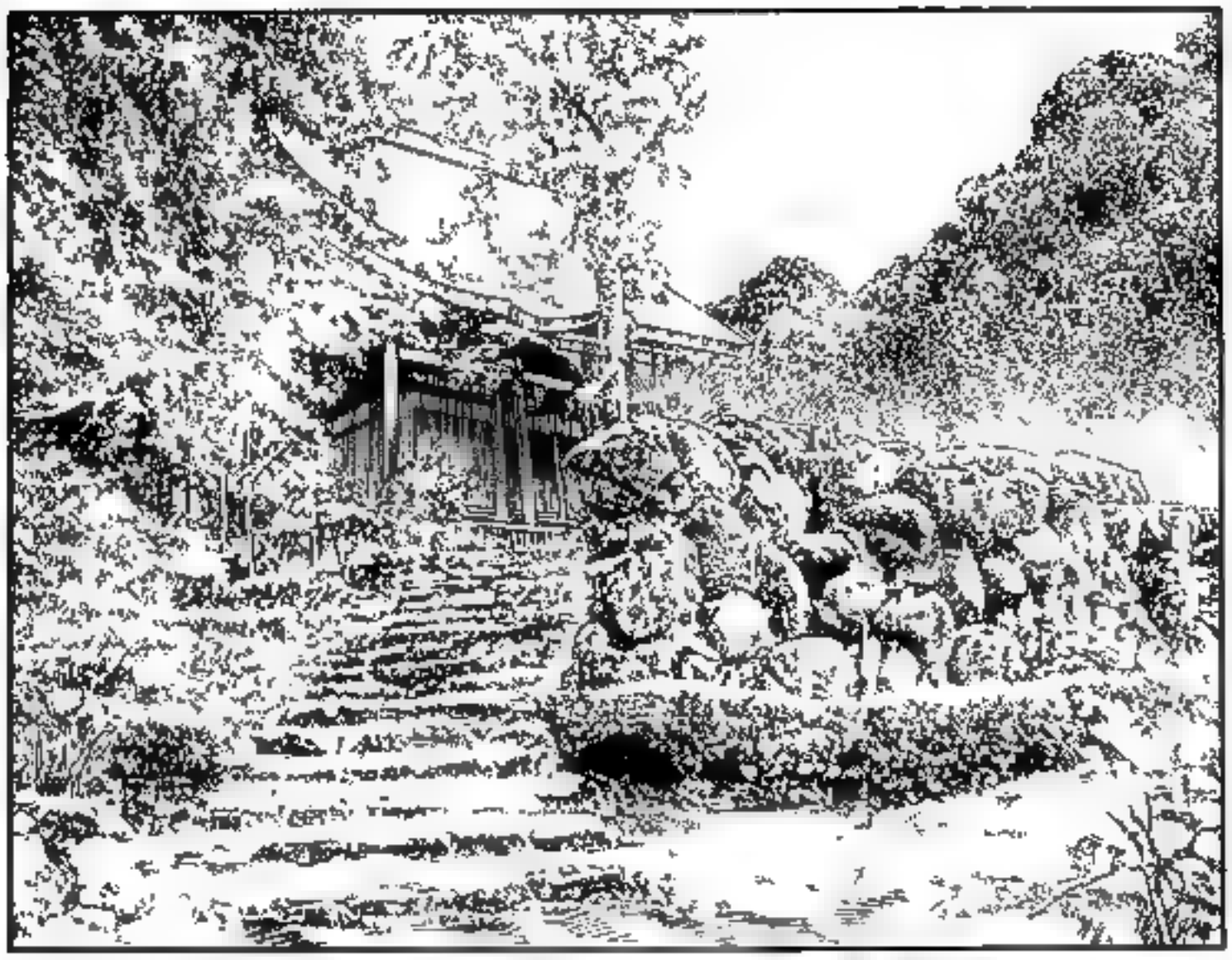
Yes, I've heard about that myself.
There's a place called "Kurozuka" on the mountain behind "Daikoku Temple"...


Still, I don't know whether to thank Yokozuki or Fate for our meeting...
To think that Nanjaku's temple was also connected to "iron"...

47

Urk...
T...That'll make good material for a column... T...Thank goodness...

"Daikoku Temple" and "Kurozuka"...
It intrigues me that these names are so similar to Kurozuka Daikoku Temple in Saitama, the other location of the Legend of the Hag.



48

Near Yokoyama
Outskirts of Haramachi,
Fukushima Prefecture

Tahaha...
Sorry, this is
embarrassing...

No, no. We're
sorry to have
disturbed
your rest.

I heard that
your temple's
name is Mt.
Kurozuka
Daikoku Temple.

I only had
one service
to perform
today, so
I thought I'd
start drinking
early...
Hahaha!

Oh?

Isabella also told me that there's a mound in the mountain out back called "Kurozuka", so I was wondering if you could...

Oh, that always happens. She always conceals herself like a witch.

A witch? You mean there really are rumors...?

But usually she's a, uh... cultured person, who teaches the local women about gardening and herb cultivation. Hahaha!

Don't worry. That's just a nickname people have given her because she's knowledgeable and tells fortunes for fun.

I see. By the way...

She's a good woman. They say she started living here after she married a Japanese man, but nobody knows any of the details, making her all the more mysterious.

5.

Ohhh, the idol ...?

Well, there was one, but uh... I needed liquor money...

I figured, since this place was called Daikoku Temple, that there would be an idol of Daikoku, but I don't see him anywhere...

The truth is...

Hahaha! Of course not! I was only joking.

You sold it? You sold the idol... Hehe!

I don't know when or why this happened, but I hear that it's called "Kurozuka" because Daikoku is buried there...

Legend has it that the idol of Daikoku is buried in the mountain out back...

They buried the idol ...!?

Did you know that there's a place called Adachi-ga-Hara in Saitama, and that they have a legend of the "Hag of Adachi-ga-Hara"?

Yes, that's it. We've had good relationships with that temple, given the identical name...

I knew that. I also know that there is a "Kurozuka" there, and a "Kurozuka Daikoku Temple"...

And from what I heard, their idol of Daikoku has been buried in the grounds for centuries, as well.

Is that true!?

Don't bother. It's completely blocked off by dirt.

It looks like it goes deeper ...

It's almost like the hag's grotto...

I guess we cannot look deep into the grotto...

I...I CAN'T STAND DOGS! ESPECIALLY WHEN THEY'RE UNCHAINED...

.....
Looks like we're invading the wild dogs' territory.

NEITHER CAN I... AND TO MAKE MATTERS WORSE, ISABELLA'S BEEN FEED-ING THEM MEAT...

M...
MEAT!?
EEEEEE
EEP!
WAA
AAA
AAA
AAA
AAA
UGH!
H...
HEY!

SHOO!
SHOOO
OOO!

AH
HH!
!

WAAAAAAAAAUGH...

Urk...

Kcccchh...

Crack

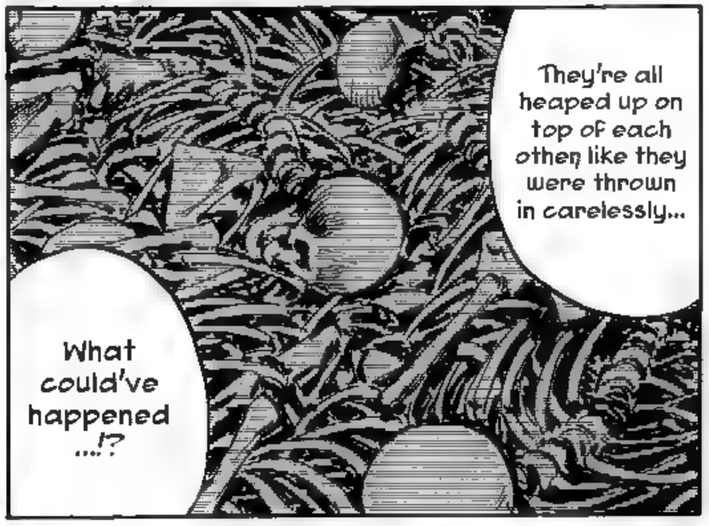
Crack

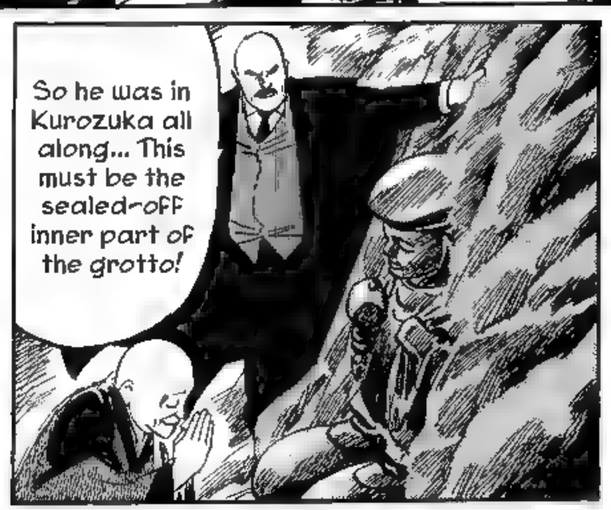
P...Please, get off me. I'm leaking from the pressure...

Just kidding. I haven't had any problems with diarrhea since that herb Isabel-la... Hmm?

There's so many of them...

Ohhh hh...


They're all heaped up on top of each other, like they were thrown in carelessly...
What could've happened ...!?


So he was in Kurozuka all along... This must be the sealed-off inner part of the grotto!

It was...
Wait. I've seen a place like this before...

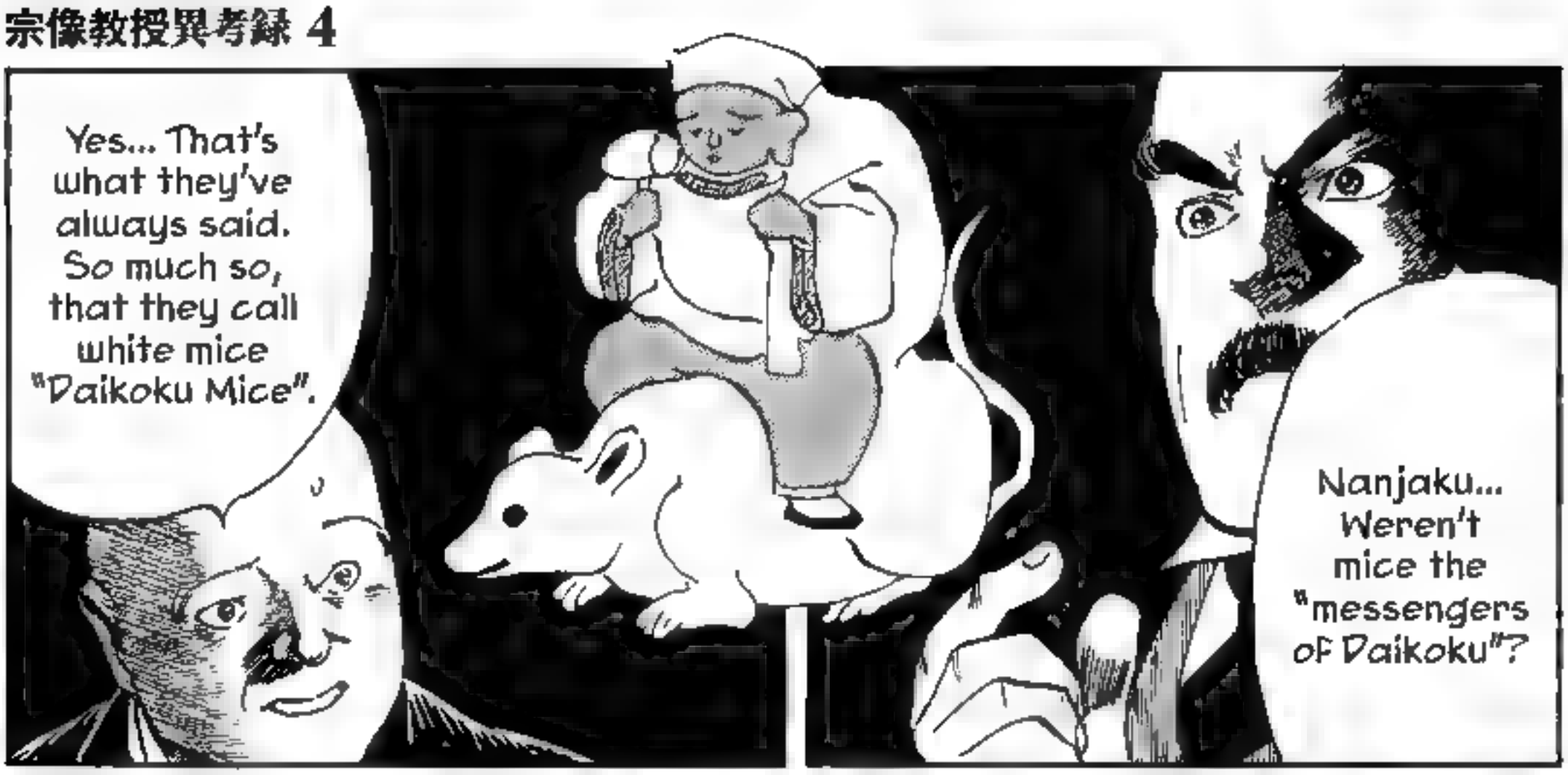
Dai-koku...

Izumo... I saw the bones of many Jomon people in a cave facing the Sea of Japan, with the entrance blocked off...

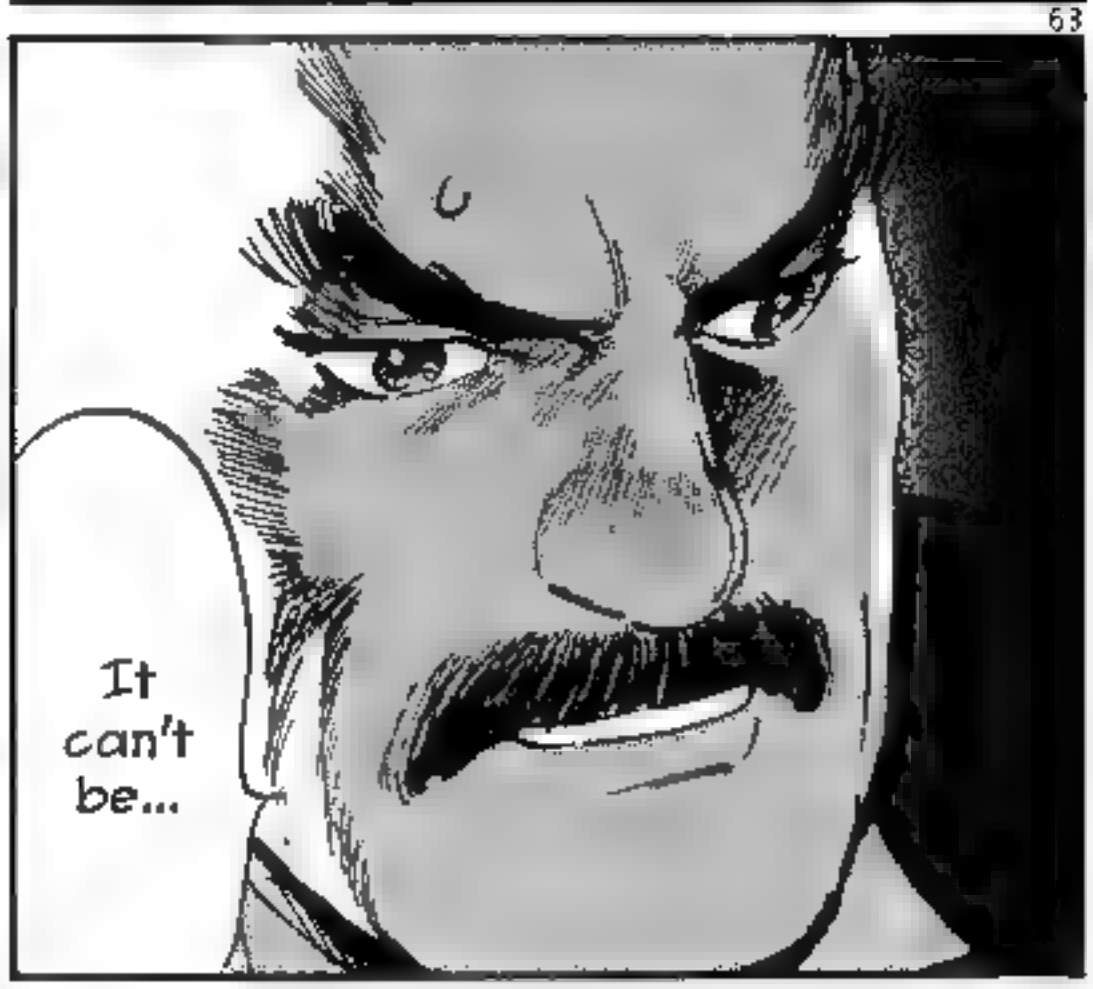
They were killed by the plague that came from the continent...

62

This... looks like a mouse...


Yes... That's what they've always said. So much so, that they call white mice "Daikoku Mice".
Nanjaku... Weren't mice the "messengers of Daikoku"?

Bubonic Plague...


It can't be...

It once caused Medieval Europe to lose one-third of its population.

It's a disease that's spread through fleas that leech off of rodents...

Bubonic Plague ...?

Huh?

Since no one knew the true cause, some suspected the Jews of poisoning them, while others blamed witches.

The "Witch Hunts" were carried out over the centuries when epidemics like the Bubonic Plague were spread.

Because those infected would be covered from head to toe in black flecks, it was called the "Black Death"

The only records of the Bubonic Plague landing in Japan begin in modern times, but there may have been earlier secret epidemics in confined regions.

And just like Europe, their group psychology may have led them to hunt inno cent people...

65

I see. And at the end, they had to turn to Daikoku for salvation...

Perhaps that's why they buried Daikoku, the lord of all mice, to seal away the disease.

No...

It could be that the ancients had faintly recognized the connection between mice and the Bubonic Plague...

B...But what do we do now, Professor Munakata? We can't call for help, and we can't climb out...

I see...

If they were wolves, they'd be calling for the "Hag of the Forge" about now...

Okay, okay! You just wanted to play with those men, but they got lost, right? Take me to them!

I'm going to check the bus schedule.

You really saved our lives, Isabella. I would've been traumatized if I'd spent the night surrounded by those bones!

Plus, you cured my stomach. Thank you so much!

The women that were performing discreet abortions were scapegoated in the aftermath of a severe plague...

I have to say, I'm grateful for being able to discover that cavern.

And based on that, the villagers handed down their dark and guilty memories through a variety of stories.

And this witch hunt became the bloody origin of the Legend of the Hag.

"Kurozuka" may have been the place that they sealed away these dark facts.

Thank you. You've been a great help.

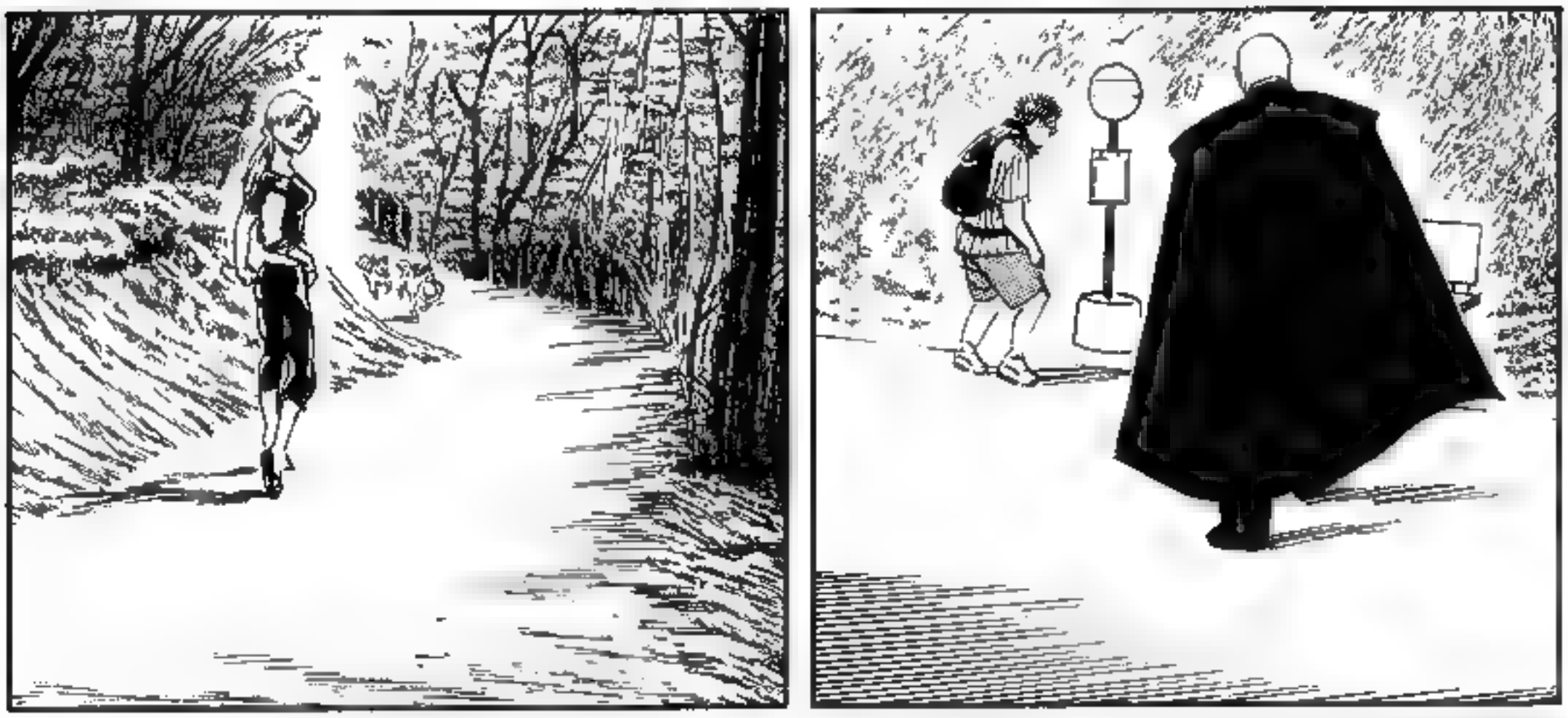
...It makes me happy that the history of these unfortunate women has come to light.

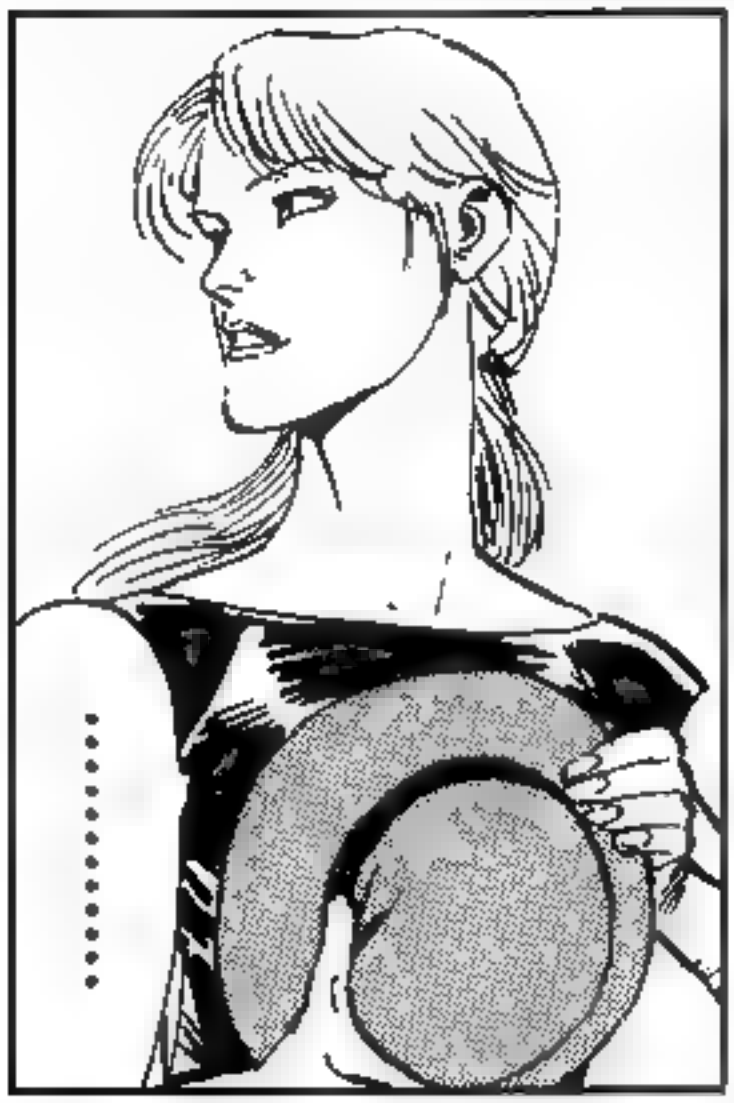
But you learned a lot because of that. It would be a shame if you did nothing but berate him, Professor Munakata.

I'm not berating him, just cautioning him on his lack of knowledge... Well, goodbye.

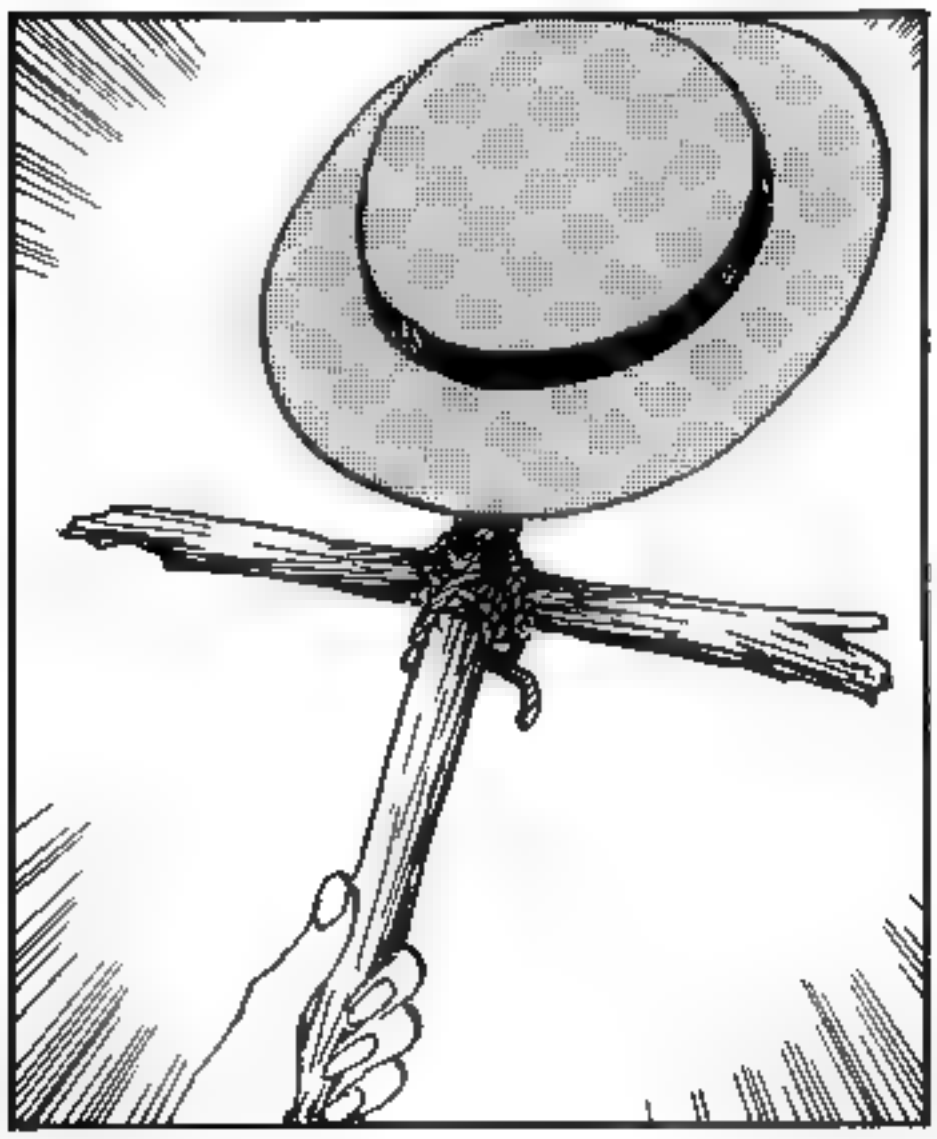
Yokozuki? He was just suffering from diarrhea.

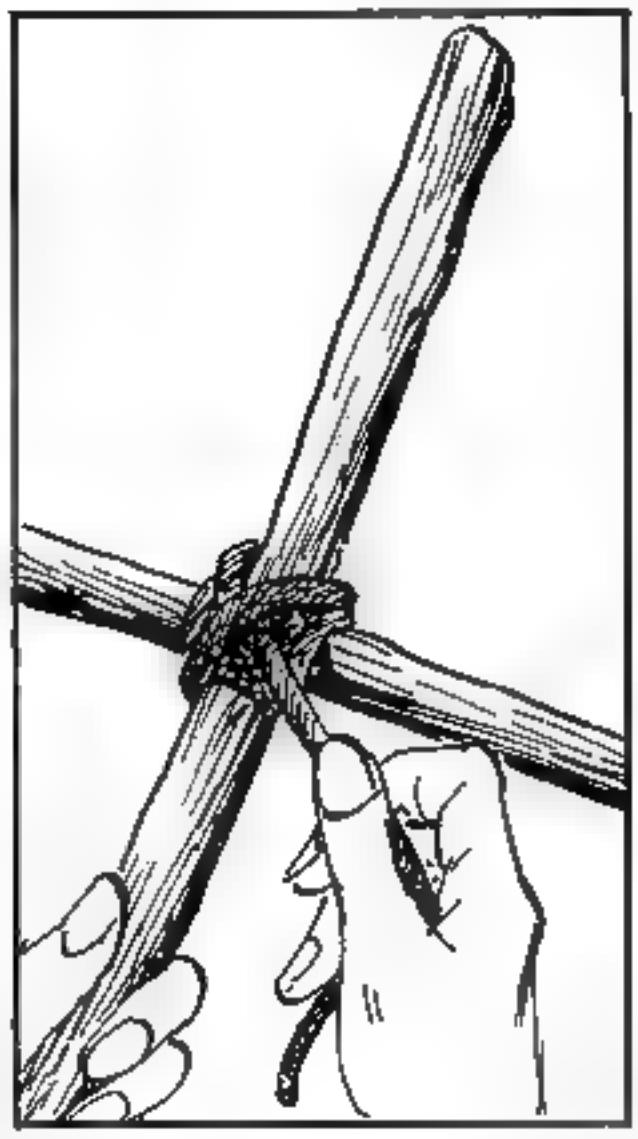
You should be grateful to Mr. Yokozuki, too.

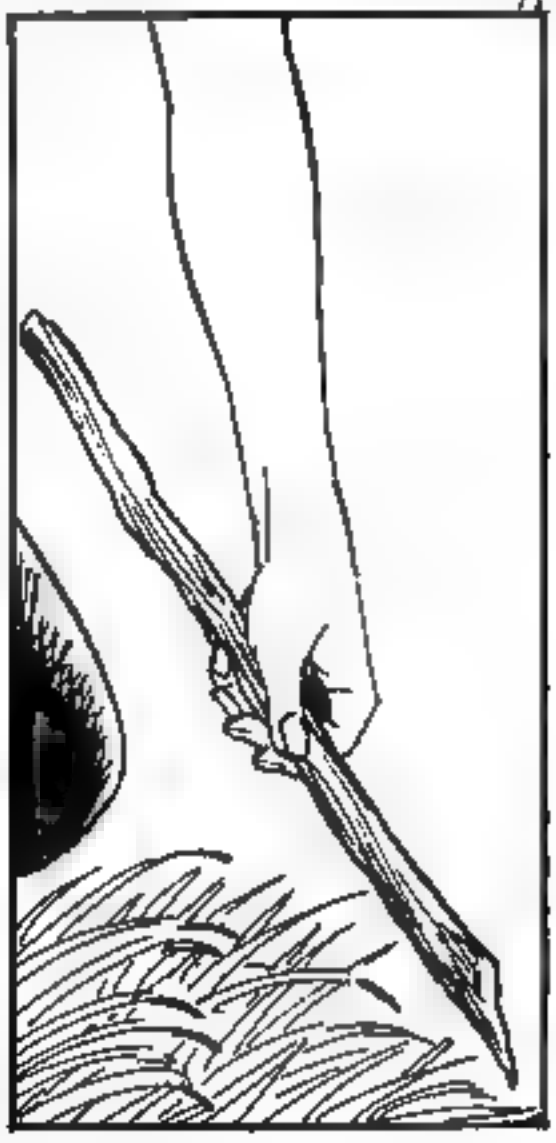




Oh...







P... Professor Muna-kata?

Mmm mmm mngh!

Urk ...?

Urr rrrg gggh hhh...

The Case Records of Professor Munakata Collection 4 – END

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◆

鉄の帝国

『ビッグコミック』2006年2月25日号、3月10日号、3月25日号

◆

黒塚

『ビッグコミック』2006年8月10日号、8月25日号、9月10日号

◎参考資料・協力◎

「巨石人像を追って── 南太平洋調査の旅」木村重信・著（日本放送出版協会）
『グラフィティ・歴史謎事典⑩ハワイ・南太平洋の謎」秋道智彌・著（光文社）／『あるくみるきく144」（日本観光文化研究所）
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THE CASE RECORDS OF PROFESSOR MUNAKATA

CHAPTER 13

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